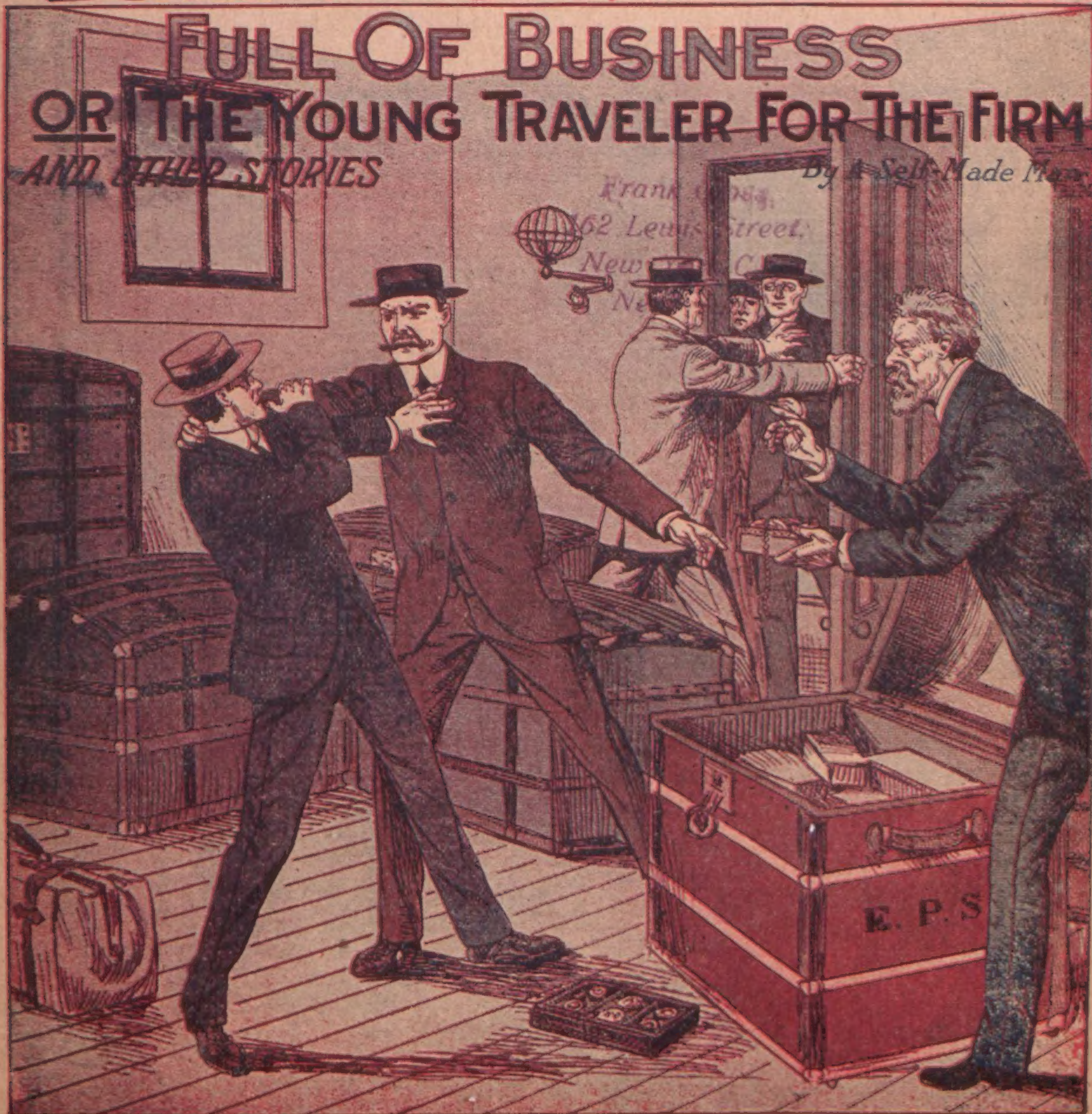


FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF
BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

FULL OF BUSINESS
OR THE YOUNG TRAVELER FOR THE FIRM
AND OTHER STORIES



Harry was amazed. The missing jewelry was in his trunk. Judson grabbed him. "You young thief!" he bellowed. "I've caught you with the goods. It's jail for yours now!"

The searcher held up some more of the missing property.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

Issued Weekly—Subscription price, \$3.50 per year; Canada, \$4.00; Foreign, \$4.50. Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, Inc., 168 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 4, 1911, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

No. 871

NEW YORK, JUNE

1922 Print Five Cent Magazine Price 7 Cents

FULL OF BUSINESS

OR, THE YOUNG TRAVELER FOR THE FIRM

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—On the Wrong Tack.

"I have certainly missed my way, for I ought to have reached the village before this. Now it's getting dark and I don't know where I am," said Harry Green, feining in his horse and looking over the country landscape on either side of the long, dusty road. Harry was a young commercial traveler out on his first trip. He was employed by the firm of Hatch & Co., of Chicago, jobbers of cheap jewelry, watches, stylographic pens, and a miscellaneous collection of nicknames, which the firm picked up at rock bottom figures at auction sales and sold at a handsome profit through traveling salesmen. The young drummer was supposed to sell only by sample and transmit his orders to the firm to be filled, and carry out this impression he carried a regular sample case around with him; but as a matter of fact he also carried a trunk full of the goods which he delivered himself, taking the cash for the same.

These goods he had bought and paid for before starting out, but any unsold articles at the end of the trip he had the privilege of returning and getting his money back for the same. The reason he carried a trunkful of duplicate was because he visited chiefly villages and small towns, the storekeepers of which, in many cases, were people who did not require to purchase a bill of goods large enough to make it worth while transmitting their order to Chicago, so he supplied them on the spot for cash. As he sold only to dealers at wholesale figures, he could not be considered in any sense a peddler, and was not liable to arrest for selling goods without a local license. Harry made his headquarters at a town on the railroad, stopping at a second-rate hotel, and when he had done the town thoroughly he would hire a horse, take his sample, and another case full of duplicates, and start out for a tour of the nearby villages, leaving his trunk at the hotel, in the storage-room.

When he got back to the town he would board the first local going in the direction he was bound and go on to his next stand. His side trips sometimes extended over a week and took him quite a distance from town, and he was often compelled to put up for the night, and more often for his meals, at a farmhouse on his route. On the morning previous to the afternoon we introduce him to the attention of the reader, he left the town of Springdale for the village of Edgewater. After doing business there

he pushed on to another village a few miles away, where he put in the night at the inn. Here he learned of a large village ten miles away, and he went on there first thing in the morning. He did very well there, and was about to return to Springdale when the hotel man, where he got his dinner, told him that if he would go on to Woodland, eight miles away, he ought to do business there in his particular line.

After considering the matter, Harry got the bearings of the village, had the road pointed out, and started. He should have reached Woodland around six, but it was now close on to seven, twilight was coming on, and the village was nowhere in sight. He had, without knowing it, taken the wrong turning at the cross-roads, and was getting further away from his destination ever moment. The road ran up hill from the point where he stopped to survey his surroundings, and he decided to push on to the highest point, thinking that from that elevated place he might see the village in the distance. When he reached the top of the hill, only outlying farms met his sight. The village was nowhere in sight. When his gaze rested on the foot of the hill, where the road swung around to the left, he spied what he took to be a road-house embowered among the trees. The house was only a third of a mile away, so he did not hurry his animal, and he made the distance at a walk.

Dusk gathered rapidly, and it was almost dark by the time he reached the house. The gloom was intensified by the overcast sky which had hidden the sun all the afternoon. Harry found the building was not a road-house, but a large dwelling surrounded by a weather-stained picket fence, which took in a barn and one or two smaller outbuildings. All the windows in sight were dark and, as far as appearances went, he could not tell whether the house was inhabited or not, but he judged it must be, and that people were at supper in a back room on the ground floor. He opened the gate, walked his horse in, and tied him to a large apple tree on one side of the front yard. Then he walked around to the rear. He found lights here, as he expected, and he knocked on the back door. An elderly woman opened the door and looked at him inquisitively.

"How do you do, ma'am," said Hal, politely. "Can you tell me how far I am from the village of Woodland?"

"Woodland!" she exclaimed. "That's all of ten miles from here."

"Ten miles!" ejaculated the boy. "I thought it was close by. I must have come a long distance out of the way. The landlord of the hotel at Fairview told me it was only eight miles from there. I left Fairview at two o'clock, and took the road he pointed out, and now it's after seven and I'm two miles further from Woodland, apparently, than when I started."

"You must have taken the wrong road at the fork. Had you taken the right one you would only have had a mile to go. You have come nine miles out of your way."

"That's kind of awkward for me. I'm a stranger in this part of the country, and if I try to get to Woodland in the dark I'm likely to make a worse job of it than I have already done. It looks as if it might rain soon, too. Could you accommodate me here for the night. I will pay whatever you think is right."

"No," she said, "we couldn't accommodate you. The house is full."

"Well, if you can't furnish me with a bed, I suppose you can't," he said, in a disappointed tone. "Perhaps you could provide me with supper. I see no chance of getting anything to eat to-night unless you do. I will pay you for it."

The woman hesitated. Then she said she would see. She closed the door, leaving him standing outside, and Harry waited for her to return, trusting he would not be sent away hungry. Presently a man appeared out of the darkness of the yard.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, in a sharp tone, "what you doing around here? Who are you?"

"I am a commercial traveler on my way to Woodland, but being ignorant of the proper way there, I came quite a distance out of my way. I have just been talking to the woman of the house. As it's very dark and the sky suggests rain, I asked her if I could remain all night, offering to pay for the accommodation. She said it was impossible, as the house was full. From that I judge that the family occupies all the rooms. She has retired to find out if I will be permitted to remain to supper."

"Supper! I fancy you'll get no supper here unless I say so."

"Are you the master of the house?"

"No; but what I say goes."

"Well, you see the fix I'm in. Unless you oblige me with supper I'm not likely to get anything to eat before morning. I'll pay you for it."

"What will you pay?"

"I think fifty cents would be a fair price."

"And what will you pay for a bed if I find you one?"

"Fifty cents more."

"And you'll want breakfast. Are you willing to pay another half a dollar for that?"

"Yes," replied the young commercial traveler, who felt that though the price was high, he would rather stand it than search for Woodland in the dark.

"Hand over the money and you can stay."

Hal shoved his hand in his pocket.

"Perhaps you'd like to take it out in a watch," he said.

"A watch!" cried the man. "Ain't you got any money?"

"Oh, yes, but as I'm selling a fine grade of a gun metal watch for \$1.50—warranted first-class time-keeper, guaranteed for at least one year, perfect in all respects, fully as good as a \$50 gold repeater for your service, your money back inside of thirty days if the watch fails to come up to what I represent it—I thought maybe I could make a trade."

The watch in question was what Hal was selling at \$1 wholesale, and as it cost him about 70 cents, he naturally preferred making a trade for one than coming down with \$1.50 in cash.

"I'll look at it," said the man.

"What'll you charge for feeding my horse and keeping him in your barn overnight?"

"You're riding a horse, are you. I'll charge you another fifty cents."

"All right," said Hal. "He's tied to a tree in the front yard."

They went and got the horse and took him to the stable. The man lighted a lantern and helped take his saddle and two cases off. He eyed the later curiously.

"You're selling watches around the country?" he said.

"I'm taking orders for cheap jewelry, watches and other things. Sometimes I sell a watch, or a piece of jewelry, or something else, as a special favor, at wholesale price."

"You carry your stock in those cases, I suppose?"

"Yes. They're my samples cases that I use to show my goods and take orders with. The goods selected are afterwards shipped to the customer from my firm in Chicago."

The cases were placed on a low shelf used for carpenter work, for there was a string of tools at the back of it, and they left the barn, the man locking the door.

CHAPTER II.—A Strange Pair.

Harry entered the house with the man. The room they walked into was the kitchen, and the woman was busy at the stove. A table was spread for supper there, and the young traveler noticed there were but two plates.

"Lay another plate, Jane," said the man; "this young man sups with us. He also stays all night and will take breakfast, so you had better get the red room ready for him later."

"The red room!" she repeated, faintly.

"I said the red room," said the man, harshly.

The woman made no reply, but turned to the stove, and her movements appeared nervous and unsteady. As the young traveler was a close observer of all that transpired around him, he wondered at her agitated manner. He guessed the woman was the man's wife, and that she was afraid of him. If the red room in question was a spare one, why had the woman told him that he could not be accommodated, alleging that the house was full? She might at least have laid his request before the master of the house before turning him down. In any case he did not see why the master or the mistress should refuse their hospitality to one placed in the situa-

tion he was. It wasn't like country people to do so. Harry took a seat out of the way to wait till he was called to the table. The man filled a tin basin with water out of a bucket near the sink and proceeded to wash himself. He combed and brushed his rough hair with the aid of a small mirror attached to the wall near the window looking out of the back yard.

"Well, isn't supper nearly ready?" he growled as he turned around.

"Yes," said the woman in a low tone.

"Dish it up, then, and lay that other plate as I told you to," he said.

The woman placed a third plate with knife and fork at the side of the table, and then brought the cooked food on dishes. She poured out three cups of coffee, and announced that supper was ready.

"Sit up, young man," said the man, throwing down the paper. "We haven't a big spread, but the old woman didn't expect a visitor."

Harry drew up his chair and was served to a portion of bacon and eggs, and told to help himself to the fried potatoes and the bread and butter.

"Make yourself at home," said the man. "What did you say your name was?"

"Harry Green."

"Mine is Smith. This is my wife."

Harry bowed to the woman, but as she was looking down at her plate, his politeness was lost on her.

"The family will have no objection to my remaining here overnight, I hope?" ventured Hal, wishing to make sure on that point.

"Don't you worry about that. I've given you a room and you're going to pay me for it, also for your supper and breakfast, and taking care of your horse. As long as you can pay there won't be no trouble about you staying."

Harry kept his ears cocked for sounds indicating the presence of the family in the front of the house, but not a sound reached him from that direction. Still supposing that a large family occupied the house, he looked to see one or more members of it come into the kitchen, but none came. Several times he was on the point of referring to the family, but he didn't. When supper was over the man asked him if he wanted to go to bed soon. Harry looked at the cheap watch he carried and saw it was half-past eight.

"I'm not in a hurry," he said.

"You can look over the paper," said Smith, handing him the News. "Go and get the red room ready," he added to his wife.

The woman looked at her husband and hesitated. He took a step toward her in a menacing way, and that started her. In the course of fifteen minutes the woman returned and began clearing off the table.

"Is the room ready?" asked her husband, going to her.

"Yes," she answered, laconically.

"What did you do with the lamp?"

"I left it burning in the entry," she replied.

"If you want to retire I'll show you the way," said Smith to the visitor.

Harry had no objection, for he felt in the way in the kitchen, so he got up and said he was ready to turn in.

"Come along, then," said the man.

The lamp stood on the back stairs. Smith picked it up and mounted the flight. Harry followed him. Not a sound reached his ears but the man's footfall and his own. The house was certainly uncommonly quiet for one fully occupied as the woman had told him it was. A long corridor, with doors on either side, took them to the end of the second story. Here Smith opened a door and introduced the young traveler into the red room. It was fully entitled to its name, for the walls were papered in a deep red color, and the furniture was upholstered to match. The bureau even was set off by red tidies. The carpet was also of a pronounced red pattern. The effect was not pleasant on the nerves and eye. The lamplight cast weird shadows over the red walls and about the corners which the light was not strong enough to illuminate.

"I don't wonder you call this the red room," said Harry. "I never saw so much red in one combination before. I can't say that I admire the taste of the person responsible for the decoration."

"Don't you like it?"

"No."

"This is the best room in the house."

"The best room! Why isn't it occupied by the master and mistress, then?"

"The doctor and his family are away in Europe."

"Oh, they are? And who lives in this house besides you and your wife?"

"Nobody."

"But your wife told me the house was full."

"She didn't want you to stay here."

"Didn't she like my looks?"

"Your looks are all right, but you see this is the 13th of May."

"What has that date got to do with me staying here one night?"

"Because on the night of the 13th of May things happen in the house."

"What happens?"

"I'd rather not tell you. Nothing happens in this room, that's why I've put you here. If you hear sounds around the house later on, pay no attention to them. Probably you won't hear them if you go right to sleep and you're tired."

"Do you want me to understand that the house is haunted on the night of the 13th of May?"

"Well, that's what my wife says."

"What do you say about it?"

"I've heard strange sounds," but they don't bother me any."

"This is such a singular looking room that if any part of the house was haunted I should be inclined to fancy it would be this room."

"No, this room is all right. Me and the missus always use it on this night. As I've given it to you, we'll have to sleep in the barn."

"You and your wife always use it on this night, you say? How long have you lived here?"

"Thirteen years."

"Have those strange sounds been heard every 13th of May since you've been here?"

"Yes."

"Where do the doctor and his family sleep on the 13th of May when they're home?"

"They always go away on the 12th and come back on the 14th."

"Hasn't the doctor ever investigated the phenomena?"

"Yes, but he never could find out what caused the noises."

"What kind of noises are they?"

"I couldn't tell you. They're always different."

"Always different?"

"It's the garret mostly that's haunted. The sounds come from there. Crying and odd sounds like that. But as they come from the other end of the house, you mightn't hear them anyway. At any rate, you needn't be scared. You won't be hurt."

Then Smith bade him good-night and left him to turn in. Harry stood and looked after him. Something like a soft click, as if the key was turned in the door, struck upon his ears. The sound aroused the young traveler, and he walked to the door to lock it. There was no key in the lock.

"I wonder if that man locked me in here?" he asked himself.

He laid his hand on the knob and turned it. He found the door fast, evidently locked from the other side.

"Now, what does this all mean?" said Harry, not quite easy in his mind, not because of Smith's statement that the house was haunted on the 13th of May, but because the said Smith had clearly locked him in the red room, and the boy wondered why he had done so.

CHAPTER III.—The Girl.

He went to the window, which he noticed was down a couple of inches at the top, and started to lift the bottom sash. It wouldn't move. He looked to see what was holding it, and found that a nail was driven in on either side. Then he tried to pull down the upper sash, but that, too, was secured in some way. With the door locked and the window immovable, Harry realized that he was a prisoner for keeps.

"If I had a revolver I wouldn't feel quite so helpless," he murmured. "Yet why should I expect a hostile visit from that man? If he is after my property he knows it is in the barn. Still, I have money about me, and he probably figures on that, though I showed him none. A person could be murdered in this lonesome place and no one but the guilty person be the wiser of it. To say the truth, I don't like the looks of things at all. My unlucky star was in the ascendant when I missed the road to Woodland."

So time passed slowly away and ten o'clock came around. Not a sound reached his ears from below. He was not surprised at that, for he was in the wing farthest from the kitchen. The rooms above, below and around him were untenanted. Smith's story about the uncanny proceedings on the 13th of May had no effect on his mind, did not affect his nerves. He did not believe the yarn. Neither did he put much faith in ghosts and such spiritual manifestations. At that moment Harry heard a light sound at the back of the room. He looked in that direction and saw something white against the somber red tint of the wall. It looked like a human being or the ghost of one. As the boy had al-

ready satisfied himself that the only entrance to the room was by way of the door, and the door was at the other end of the room, he may be pardoned for being a bit startled at the strange and silent appearance of the figure in white. He had little time to consider the matter, for the figure advanced toward the center of the room, and as its outlines became clearer to his sight, he saw that the visitor was a girl clad in white. Nor could it be the ghost of a girl, for there was nothing ethereal or impalpable in her composition.

It was not possible to look through her, which convinced him that he had real flesh and blood to deal with. How she could have got into the room, apparently through the solid wall, was a puzzling problem, but that she had was self-evident, consequently it stood to reason there must be a secret door in the wall. As secret doors in houses were rather out of date, it struck him that the door had been made for a purpose—probably a sinister one. These thoughts flashed through his mind while the figure was advancing. Who was this girl, and under what conditions was she an inmate of the house? Was there a mystery connected with her? What had brought her to the red room? So far she gave no sign that she was aware of his presence there.

Harry remained quiet as a mouse. He could hardly hope to escape her observation, and he was afraid if he made a movement it would startle him, and she would scream out. That was bound to reach as far as the kitchen and bring the man up to see what had caused it, for the scream itself didn't give him a clew. The girl moved quickly, passed on the other side of the table and seemed intent on only one thing, and that was reaching the door. She reached for the handle and turned it.

"Locked!" she exclaimed. "Oh, dear, will I never be able to escape from this house?"

She sank into a chair and buried her face in her hands. The girl started up with a stifled scream and stared at the boy.

"Don't be frightened, miss. Are you a prisoner in this house?" said Harry.

"Who are you, and how came you here? I never saw you before," she said.

"My name is Harry Green. I'm a commercial traveler from Chicago. Overtaken by darkness on this road I applied here for supper and a bed. I found a man and a woman in charge of the premises. They gave me a meal. He said there was no one living here but himself and his wife. Your presence here proves he did not tell the truth. Your actions show you are not a voluntary occupant of the place. Tell me who you are. If I can help you in any way I will do so."

"You can help me by unlocking the door. I have been kidnapped from my home in Chicago, and am being held here till my father pays a large sum of money for my return. If I can get out of the house I will be able to claim shelter at one of the farm-houses in the neighborhood until I have sent word to my father to come after me."

"I would gladly open the door if I could, but I cannot. The man who brought me up here locked me in, and as the windows cannot be

opened, I am as much a prisoner as you are yourself."

"Why did he lock you in?"

"I suppose his intention is to rob me. I have two hand cases of samples in the barn, where my horse is, and I have money with me. It is quite evident to me that the man is a rascal, and the woman, who is his wife, must be tarred with the same brush."

"Oh, dear, what are we to do?"

"How did you enter this room? I have examined it close enough to assume myself that the only door, other than the one leading into the closet yonder, is that locked one."

"I accidentally discovered a secret panel in the room where I have been confined in the other wing of the house. It let me into a long and narrow passage, which I followed, hoping I would be able to find my way out of the house before my escape became known, for the woman brought me my supper as usual before dark, and I did not expect another visit from her till the morning. When I reached the end of the passage I hunted for the exit I felt must be there. I could not find it, and was about to give up in despair when, as if I had touched a spring, a panel in the wall, similar to the one in the room I left, opened and I found myself in this room, which seemed to be occupied. I rushed at once to this door, only to find it was locked."

"I sympathize with you in your disappointment. You don't want to leave the room any quicker than I do. Tell me your name and how it came about that you were kidnapped from your home, and by whom."

"My name is Elsie Carter. My father is a rich merchant of Chicago. We live on Prairie avenue. I was surprised on the street near my home at dusk a month ago by three men who stifled my cries with a shawl thrown over my head. I was lifted into an automobile and carried off. After I was brought here, which seems to be a considerable distance from Chicago, for we traveled all night at a high rate of speed without stopping except for brief intervals, I was told by one of the men that I would be released when satisfactory arrangements had been made with my father for the sum of \$50,000, and the money had been duly paid."

"Three men, you say, brought you here. Was one of them named Smith?"

"I do not know their names at all. I only see the woman. She brings me my meals and waits on me. She seems very sad, like a woman with a deep grief. I think she sympathizes with me, and would help me if she dared."

"That is the woman I met downstairs—the wife of Smith. She did not want me to enter the house. She did all she could to prevent me from stopping here. Had not her husband appeared and agreed to let me stay if I would pay him a sum agreed upon between us, I would not be here now. I suppose he is one of the three men who kidnapped you. The other two do not appear to be about at the present time."

"I suppose they are negotiating with my father."

"Quite likely. Well, now, we must try to escape from here somehow. Once out of this

room, I'll bet that man couldn't prevent us from getting away."

"How can we get out of the room?"

"That's a problem. I haven't anything to force the door with. If you showed me the way to your room I suppose we should be no better off, for the door of that room is locked, too. How about the window? Is it fast like this one?"

"The lower sash is nailed, but the upper one can be moved up and down half way."

"Half way," said Harry, looking at the window and mentally calculating whether it would be possible for him to crawl out of that space. It struck him as very doubtful.

"Where is the secret panel?" he asked.

The girl took him to the back wall, but there was no sign of such a thing.

"It is closed," she said.

"It is operated with a spring, you said. The only way to open it is to find the spring, I suppose. Let us hunt for it."

He got the lamp and turned it up. He flashed the light all over the part of the wall indicated by Miss Carter, but they failed to discover the spring which released the panel from that side.

"How did you find the spring in your room?" asked Harry.

"The lamplight shone on a bright spot in the wall. It attracted my notice and I went over to see what it was. It looked like a circular disk of brass. I felt of it, pressing my finger upon it. It yielded and the panel opened, much to my astonishment."

"I don't see any brass disc on this wall. If one is here it has been painted red to agree with the color of the wall."

They finally had to give the matter up.

"You can't get back to your room, Miss Carter, but I guess you're not anxious to go back. If we are going to make our escape it must be from this room," said the young traveler.

At that moment they heard a sound at the door.

"Hist! There's some one at the door—the man Smith, probably. Hide behind the bureau," said Harry, blowing out the light as he whispered.

CHAPTER IV.—The Escape.

Harry had no chance to replace the lamp on the table, for he heard the key turning in the lock. He crouched down where he was and waited developments. The night was so black that not a gleam of light came in through the window, and therefore the room was as dark as pitch. Harry heard the door open, but could not see the person who came softly in. He reasoned that it must be Smith. Presently there came an exclamation from the bed. It sounded like a woman. Harry grabbed Miss Carter by the arm.

"We must steal out softly," he said. "The door is open."

Before they could make a move, a match was scratched, and as the tiny flame flared up the two prisoners saw that the person in the room was the woman. She held the match toward the bed and saw it was unoccupied, as her touch in the dark had indicated that it was. Harry knew that her next move would be to look around

the room, and he could not hope to escape discovery. Accordingly, he decided to take the bull by the horns. The door stood open and he could easily master the woman in a struggle. He rose and stepped forward as she turned and faced him.

"Well, Mrs. Smith, what brings you to my room?"

She started and dropped the match. This was the boy's chance, as he figured, and he glided forward and grabbed her.

"Now, what is the meaning of all this business? Why did your husband lock me in here? If you scream I'll choke you. Answer my question."

"Don't ask me—please don't," she cried, all in a tremble. "I came to release you and get you away from this house; but for my sake—I am a most unhappy woman—you will be silent as to what has happened. If you send the police to arrest us—my husband and I—it will be the last straw upon my back—it will kill me. Be satisfied then to get away with your horse and property. Take the road back to the fork, turn to your left and you will reach Woodland."

"Well, ma'am, I'm inclined to believe that you mean well. You did not want me to stay here to-night, and you did what you could to prevent me doing so."

"Yes, yes. My husband is leading a bad life and is breaking my heart."

"Why don't you leave him, then?"

"I can't; oh, I can't. He is the cross of my life, and I will not desert him, come what may. You will be silent, won't you? I am saving you from trouble, at a great risk to myself. The only thing I ask of you is not to breathe a word of what has happened to you here."

"All right, ma'am, I'll comply with your wishes for the aid you are giving me."

"May heaven bless you. If you could guess what I have passed through, and am passing through, you would pity me."

"I do pity you as the wife of such a man. Where is he now?"

"He went to the village of Eastchester a little while ago."

"Six miles from here."

"No. It is less than a mile. He did not tell you the truth about the distance lest you should decide to go on there after supper. He wanted to make the two dollars you had promised him."

"And to rob me besides. Is it not so?"

The woman was silent, but Harry felt her shiver at his words, and he knew he had voiced the truth.

"Well, never mind what he intended to do. So long as I get away before he returns I'll let the matter go. How shall I get my horse and my sample cases?"

"I have the key of the barn in my hand. Come with me and we will go there."

"All right, ma'am. You go ahead and I will follow you in a moment."

"Why do you wish to delay?"

"Well, suspecting that your husband intended to rob me when I got to sleep, I hid my money in the room. You go on while I get it. Await me at the head of the stairs. I know they are at the end of the passage."

"I will do so," she said, submissively.

He led her to the door and saw her out. He

had not hidden his money in the room. His statement was a ruse to get her out of the way so that he could have a word or two with Miss Carter and arrange for the young lady's escape. As soon as the woman started down the passage, Harry rushed back. He found the girl trembling behind the bureau.

"Now, Miss Carter," he said, "the woman is going to take me to the barn so I can get my horse and property. Follow us cautiously, and as soon as we are outside, watch us to the barn. Then get out yourself and run to the front gate. Then wait for me. Your escape will then be certain, and will probably not be discovered till morning. Long before that we will be on the road to Springadle, which is on the railroad, for I have decided not to go to Woodland now that I have you to protect and see to a place of safety where your father can come and take you back home."

"You are very good to me. I shall always remember you with gratitude, and my father will reward you liberally!"

"I don't want any reward for serving you. It is my duty to rescue you from your rascally abductors and see that you get back home in safety. Now I am going. Remember, follow with caution, for though I think you are in no danger, even if the woman found you were getting away, for I would get you away at all hazards, it is better that she be left in ignorance of your flight."

"I will do as you say," said the girl, pressing his hand to her heart.

Harry then walked out of the room and found the woman waiting for him at the head of the stairs. They went down together, and without any delay passed out of the kitchen door and went to the barn. Harry saddled his horse, secured his sample cases on his back and led him outside.

"Here's a dollar for you, ma'am, to pay you for the supper and the feed of my horse," he said.

"No, no. I don't want it," she said.

"You must take it," he said, pressing it into her trembling hand.

She locked the barn and they went as far as the house together.

"Good-by, ma'am. I hope you won't get into trouble over this. Here is my card, with my Chicago address. If you should ever stand in need of help, write to me, and I won't go back on you."

The woman made no reply, and he felt her standing near the door looking after him. He was soon in the road, and after walking his horse a few yards he saw the white figure of Miss Carter awaiting him. She rushed up and caught him by the arm.

"I am so happy to be out of that house," she said. "I shall never forget that you have aided me to escape."

"Don't mention it, Miss Carter. Now let me help you on my horse. You can sit back of the saddle and hold on to me. As one of the cases will be in your way, your position will be a bit awkward, but I'm afraid you will have to put up with it under the circumstances."

"I will put up with anything to make my escape."

In a couple of minutes they were riding down the road. The girl's position was rather ungraceful, and somewhat unpleasant, but she did not complain. After they had gone a mile, Harry allowed the horse to walk for a while. It took them more than an hour to reach the fork, where the road branched both to the left and right. The left road led to Woodland, about a mile away, the right one direct to the village of Derby, eight miles away, whence he had started out that afternoon to go to Woodland. It lay on the route to Springdale, with the village of Edgewater between. As his watch noted the hour of 11:30, Harry did not see any use of going the shorter route, as the hotel at Woodland would probably be closed for the night. In any case, he judged it expedient to carry Miss Carter to Springdale as soon as possible.

They would put up at the hotel where his trunk was, and he would telegraph to her father in Chicago to come on and get her. As they had ridden nine miles since leaving the house, Harry judged that she would appreciate a short rest, so he dismounted and lifted her down.

"I guess you find riding that way hard on you, Miss Carter," he said.

"It isn't as hard as being locked up a prisoner in a room without knowing when you will be liberated," she replied.

"That's right. You say you've been in the hands of your abductors for a month?"

"Yes."

"I suppose the police have prevented your father from coming to terms with the rascals, hoping to catch the men napping?"

"I suppose so. I know my father wouldn't hesitate a moment in paying over the amount demanded if he saw no other way of getting me back."

"Of course he would if he could raise the money."

"He could get the money in a few days."

"Have you seen the men since they brought you to the house?"

"No, but I know they were there."

"Would you be able to identify them if they were caught?"

"No. They took me by surprise when they carried me off, and I didn't see their faces very well. All I could say is they wore heavy beards."

"Smith, the woman's husband, has a smooth face. He may not have been one of the three, or their beards may have been false ones, assumed as a disguise. Do you know, I think that woman is more to be pitied than blamed. She appears to be a slave to her husband. I noticed that she was afraid of him. I wouldn't like to see her suffer for the part she has acted in connection with yourself. I dare say she was obliged to act as your jailer."

"I have no fault to find with her. She prepared nice meals for me, and did many things to make me comfortable. She wouldn't talk with me, for she always acted as if she was afraid some one was listening at the door."

"Probably her husband often did, and she couldn't tell when his ear would be at the keyhole. Well, I guess we'd better start on again. We have some distance to go. Derby is eight miles from here, and we should get there by two o'clock. As it will be no use to stop there at

that hour, I intend to push on to Edgewater, where we'll stop for breakfast and then go on to Springdale, where I'll register you at the hotel that I stopped at while doing the town. You can take a good long sleep there, and before I turn in myself I'll telegraph to your father."

They remounted the horse and went on their way.

CHAPTER V.—The Upset.

It was about half-past two when they reached Derby. They dismounted in front of the hotel, which was shut up and dark, like all the stores and houses in the neighborhood. In fact, not a light was to be seen in the village as far as they could see. Harry tied the horse, after watering him at the trough, and then rejoined the girl, who was seated on the veranda steps. After resting for half an hour they started for Edgewater. Morning dawned some time before they came in sight of the place. By and by the sun struggled at intervals through the clouds that still covered the sky to a considerable extent. The night had been cold, and it wasn't much warmer now. Harry had given his coat to Miss Carter as a protection, but as she necessarily had to hug close up to him, he didn't feel the absence of the garment as much as he otherwise would. However, he was chivalrous enough to regard her comfort as the first consideration.

The village of Edgewater was beginning to stir itself into life when Harry stopped in front of the inn. The porter, who was also the hostler and all-around factotum of the establishment, was sweeping out. He stared at the new arrivals, and then recognized the young traveler. He was evidently surprised to see the girl perched behind. Harry dismounted, assisted Miss Carter to alight, and asked the man to fetch out a couple of chairs and take his horse around to the stable. He removed his two cases and took them into the little office. The girl was so tired and sleepy after her long ride and loss of rest that she looked all done up, and Harry decided that they must stop at the inn all afternoon and give her a chance to recuperate. They had to wait an hour and a half before breakfast, and Miss Elsie went to sleep in the chair.

Harry registered their names when the proprietor appeared, and asked for a couple of rooms. He explained that he was taking the young lady to Springdale. After breakfast both retired to their rooms and slept through the whole morning, awakening much refreshed. After dinner Harry called for his horse, and put Miss Carter in the saddle, walked beside her till they had left the village behind, when he resumed the saddle and the girl took her place as before. They passed through two small villages on their way and reached the outskirts of Springdale at dark. Here Harry got off, transferred the girl to the saddle, and walked the rest of the way to the hotel. He secured two rooms and then went to supper. After the meal they walked up the street to the telegraph office, where Harry sent the dispatch to Mr. Carter, getting his address from Elsie.

They turned in early, and in the morning they felt like their usual selves. Harry decided to

remain in town till Mr. Carter came for his daughter, for he feared an effort might be made by the man Smith to recover the girl. At any rate, having rescued her, he did not propose to take any chances. When he came downstairs at half-past seven a telegram was handed to him by the hotel clerk. It was from the merchant, stating that he would take the next express the evening before for Springdale. Harry and Elsie were coming out of the dining-room after breakfast when Mr. Carter entered the hotel, and in a few moments his daughter was in his arms. The girl related her experiences from the moment she was kidnaped, and then Harry told his story.

Mr. Carter declared he would never forget the obligation the young traveler had placed him under, and wanted to pay him the reward he had offered the police—\$10,000—but Harry refused to accept it, or any sum whatever.

"All I'll take from you is the small expense I have been under on your daughter's account," he said.

As he was firm on that point, the merchant was obliged to yield. He asked the boy about the business he was in, and how long he expected to be on the road. Harry told him as near as he could figure out.

"When you return to Chicago you must call at my store," said Mr. Carter, "and I will give you a position as a clerk, or send you out on the road, as you prefer. In either case I will see that you have better opportunities for advancement than I fancy you are enjoying at present."

"I am much obliged to you, sir," said Harry, taking the business card of the firm which Mr. Carter was the head of. "I will not fail to call on you when I get back."

An hour later Elsie and her father, both blissfully happy, and both grateful to the young traveler for his services in the young lady's behalf, took the express for Chicago, and Harry stood on the station waiting for his own local going the other way to come along, and waved them a good-by. In the short time they had known each other, Harry and Elsie had become very well acquainted. The long night horseback ride, where the girl was obliged to cling close to her rescuer in order to maintain her seat on the horse, naturally had a considerable influence in weaving a warm feeling of friendship between them. Elsie was a pretty girl, though we have not mentioned the fact before, and Harry was not insensible to her many charms.

Harry was a good-looking, manly young fellow, and most girls admire those features in a boy. There was a touch of romance in their meeting, and every girl dearly loves a bit of romance to creep into her life. So it will not surprise the reader if their parting, for the time being, was marked by the interchange of promises to write to one another, and as the rapidly moving express went on its way Chicagoward, the thoughts of each other flew back and forth between them. Harry's train came in fifteen minutes later, his trunk was thrown into the baggage car by the muscular train hands, and he was soon on his way to Millville, a large manufacturing town, where he expected to do a profitable business in his line. A run of twenty-five miles brought him to Millville. His trunk was uncere-

moniously dumped out on the platform with other inoffensive trunks, and the train went on.

He got into the bus that bore the name of the Commercial House, and was frequented by Commercial travelers, traveling theatrical companies and baseball teams, after arranging with an expressman to transport his trunk there. He busied himself before dinner, which was here served in the middle of the day, in picking up information about the business section of the town. After dinner he started out to pick up orders. As Hatch & Co. had no regular customers we might say, though the firm was not unknown to dealers who had dealt with them through other drummers, the amount of business Harry might do in Millville depended wholly on his ability to push his goods. He was provided with a list of the dealers who had previously bought of Hatch & Co., as well as other dealers who had not, and with his regular sample case he began his tour to take orders only. His prices being low, and his line of samples attractive he managed to secure several fair orders, which he later forwarded by mail to his firm.

He put in the evening at a show, and next morning he went out with both cases. On this round he struck retail dealers and sold outright many things from his cases. As he was paying his own expenses, railroad fare excepted, he depended on these cash sales for ready money, and a portion of his profit. He spent the whole day on this tack, and then after supper he made inquiries regarding the outlying places, as was his custom. He learned there was a small town to the south that was a live place. He found he could get there by the daily stage. The name of the town was Exeter. Taking both cases he boarded the coach in the morning, with two other passengers, and was presently en route.

After leaving the outskirts of the town, the way ran along a shady country road, bordered by fields under cultivation, though it was early in the season. The coach carried an express box and several pouches of mail. At a cross-road the farmer who sat on the box seat with the driver got down. A light wagon driven by a boy was awaiting him. Harry took advantage of his leaving to get up alongside the driver himself. He found the jehu a talkative sort of chap, who had been around a considerable part of the West, and time passed more pleasantly than it had inside with the three passengers, one of whom was a woman. A few miles further on they came to another cross-road. Here was a general store, a blacksmith shop, and a small collection of houses. Exeter was less than two miles away.

The driver watered his horses at the trough in front of the store, handed the storekeeper a small bundle of papers and three letters, and bought a plug of tobacco. The woman got out of the stage and started toward one of the houses with a bundle the driver handed down from the roof of the vehicle. After a wait of ten minutes the stage went on. Three-quarters of a mile further on the vehicle ascended a small hill, from the top of which Harry caught a distant view of the town over the tops of the trees of a woods below. A wooden bridge was to be seen at the foot of the hill on that side. The bridge spanned a narrow and shallow stream

such as one often meets with in the country. The driver pointed out a factory at the head of Main street, which, he said, they would pass before they entered the town.

"What do they make there?" Harry asked.

"Novelties, they call the thingembobs they turn out. I drop one of the mail bags there. There are several express bundles for them, too, but I have to take 'em on to the express office. I carry a big load of mail back with me, goods they are sending out all over the country. I get the bags at the post-office, not at the factory, and I carry a bunch of their express matter, too."

"How is it that you deliver the mail to the factory? I should think you'd have to take it to the post-office," said Harry.

"They have an arrangement with the Millville post-office on account of the amount of mail matter they receive. It saves time for them, and enables them to fill orders in time for me to take back a part of them this afternoon. They have quite a bunch of registered mail, too, but that I have to take to the post-office, and they get it from there."

"I see," said Harry, as the horses struck the bridge and dashed across it.

He saw something else the next morning. It was the sudden dipping of the forward end of the bridge. He saw it too late to call the driver's attention to it. He grasped the jehu's arm and opened his mouth to speak, when with a crash the bridge sank at the left corner, the horses slid off into the water, with the stage pressing them forward, and then as a second crash resounded on the calm air, the vehicle turned over on its side, tossing the young traveler into the stream, and the driver after him, and then landed at an angle of forty-five degrees. The two men inside were thrown into a heap and in a great peril from suffocation by the intruding water. Three men appeared as if by magic from the bushes and rushed to the assistance of the coach. One clambered on the upturned side and pulled the door open. He reached down and helped the passengers out, awkwardly shoving both into the stream, which was not deep enough to drown them. The other two began rescuing the mail bags and the express box. They dropped them into a rowboat which they pulled out from under the bridge.

Harry was trying to reach the bridge when he saw his two cases of samples go into the boat after the express box. One of the men stepped into the boat, shoved it under the bridge away from the half submerged coach, and out at the other side, while the other two men offered a hand to the passengers to assist them up on the steep bank. The first thing the driver did was to release the horses, and Harry helped him do it.

"They can't get up here. We'll have to lead them down a bit to the ford," said the driver.

It took fully fifteen minutes for them to get the animals ashore and back to the side of the bridge nearest the town.

"I don't understand how that bridge could have given way," said the jehu. "It is a strong structure, and was all right when I passed over it yesterday afternoon. The bank must have suddenly given way at the corner on this side. The water probably undermined it during the spring

freshet. This places me in a nice fix. Some one will have to go on to town for help to pull out the stage. I've got to stay here and watch the mail bags and the express box. You can help me get them out. You can't get much wetter than you are."

"Two of those men pulled them out and placed them in a rowboat with my sample cases. All you'll have to do will be to watch the boat which they shoved under the bridge," said Harry.

"Good. That saves me some trouble. I dare say one of the men will go on to town for me."

"I don't see them now," said Harry, as they approached the broken end of the bridge with the horses. "There's your two passengers, but the men have gone away."

"They've gone to town to carry the news," said the driver.

Apparently they had, for on asking the two passengers, one of them said the two men had started off down the road as soon as they had helped them ashore, saying they were going for help. They could not be seen as the road turned sharply to the right a hundred yards away.

"Where's the other man, there were three of them," said Harry. "He must be in the boat on the other side of the bridge."

Harry stepped to the other side and looked down. He saw no boat. He peered under the broken bridge, but the boat wasn't there. He looked up the stream as far as he could see the water through the trees, that grew close down to it, but as the stream turned off close by, he saw nothing of the boat or the man.

"That man has rowed the boat away with your mail bags and my property. Can he reach town with them that way?" Harry asked the driver.

"What's that? What are you talking about?" said the jehu.

Harry explained more clearly.

"What in thunder did he do that for?" roared the driver. "Of course he can't reach town that way. The stream runs away from the town right through the woods. Are you sure he carried off the mail bags?"

"I'm positive, for I saw him and one of the other men pull the bags, the express box and my sample cases from under the seat and drop them into the boat. Then one of the men got in and rowed the boat under the bridge. I supposed he intended to tie it there, on the other side, away from the broken end. I hope those fellows are not thieves. I don't want to lose my cases any more than you do the mail bags and express box."

The driver uttered an imprecation and began dancing around like a wild man.

CHAPTER VI.—Tracking the Thieves.

"Did you see a man row a boat up into the woods with the mail bags in it?" he excitedly asked the two passengers.

No; they had not seen the man row the boat up the stream, but they had seen two of the men getting the bags out of the overturned coach and drop them into a boat between the bridge and the vehicle. What had become of the boat with its contents they did not know.

"Where did the men come from, did any one notice?" asked the driver.

Under the strenuous circumstances no one had noticed, not even the jehu, who had had the best chance of seeing. All anybody could say was that they were right upon the scene when the accident took place, though they were not in sight the instant before.

"If the mail bags and the express box have been stolen I'll be in a pretty pickle," said the driver, with a worried look.

"I'll run into the woods and follow the stream and see if I can find any trace of the boat," said Harry, who was more concerned about his own property than about the mail pouches and express box.

"Do so and I'll go too. Scramble across the bridge, you're lighter than I am, and take the other side. I'll follow this side."

The driver sat down, took off his boots and emptied out the water. Harry took off his shoes and stockings, got rid of the superfluous moisture and put them on again. He was soaked to the skin, as were the driver and the passengers, and the quartette were not feeling very comfortable. The young traveler crossed the shaky remains of the bridge and rushed into the woods, while the driver entered on that side. Harry, being the most active of the two, soon distanced the driver. The stream did not go straight at any point, but wound through the woods like a long snake. The boy followed its course, but he saw no sign of the boat. Not a sound reached his ears but what he made himself. He hustled along to keep off the chill of his wet garments, and after going perhaps half a mile to came out of the woods into a field. A quarter of a mile away he saw a farmhouse. In the next field two men were working. Fields stretched away on the opposite side of the stream, and there was another farmhouse over there. He was now able to get a better view of the stream, which ran straight until it was lost in the distance, but he saw no boat upon it. However, he knew the boat had passed that way and he did not pause. Without his sample cases there was no use for him to turn back and go on to town. When he got on a line with the farm-house on his side, he suddenly came upon a boat tied to the bank. He stopped and looked at it. It was wet inside in places and he believed it was the boat he was after.

There was nothing in it but a pair of oars thrown carelessly along the two seats, and they were dripping as if from recent use.

"I'll bet the other two men rejoined the chap in the boat along here somewhere and the three have carried off the pouches, express box and my cases between them."

And yet that looked something like a feat for three men to do, particularly at a spot where they would be likely to invite observation. While he was considering the matter he noticed the parallel ruts made by wagon wheels. The ruts looked fresh, and this convinced him the men had had a wagon waiting here to aid them. The ruts led straight toward the farm-house, and Harry followed the tracks. When he reached the fence that cut off the field he saw a lane began there and ran past the farm-yard. The rails must have been removed to permit the wagon to pass

through. At any rate, the tracks went straight on under the fence. The wagon ruts were not so clear in the lane, and were soon lost in a multitude of other wagon tracks by the farmer's wagon. However, that didn't greatly matter—the wagon went down the lane to the road beyond. Harry walked over to the farm-house to make a few convincing inquiries. The farmer's wife came to the back door and stared at him. Well she might in his damp and mussed condition.

"For gracious sake! Hev you been in the river, young man?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am. I was a passenger on the stage going to Exeter. The bridge broke down and dumped us all into the stream."

"You don't say. The bridge broke down, did it? How came it to break down?"

"I couldn't tell you, ma'am. I want to ask you a question or two."

"I'll listen to you, but you'd better come inside. I've got a spare room where you can take your things off, and I'll loan you some of my husband's clothes to put on while your own are drying. You'll get your death of cold going around that way."

"Thank you, ma'am, I guess I'll have to accept your kind offer. I suppose there isn't any use of my following the wagon that came through here a little while ago from the stream below, for I couldn't overtake it on foot. You saw the wagon, didn't you?"

"You mean the wagon that went to the river to meet a boat and get some stuff off her?"

"Yes. There were three men in it."

"There was. One of them came to the house and asked permission to let down the fence and cross the meadow. I let 'em do it."

"Were the men strangers to you?"

"They were. Are they friends of yours?"

"No. They are charged with stealing the mail pouches and others things from the stage after the vehicle fell into the stream when the bridge broke down."

"For goodness sake!"

"Did you see the wagon when it came back?"

"I saw it coming across the meadow, but I didn't pay no attention to it."

"The three men were in it, then?"

"Yes, I guess so."

"Your lane connects with a road?"

"Of course."

"Where does it lead to?"

"It runs through the woods into the Exeter highway one way, and off that direction to Clayton Center and beyond," said the woman, waving her arm. As the men wouldn't be likely to go toward Exeter, Harry judged that the wagon, with the stolen mail bags and other things, was driven toward Clayton Center. To attempt to follow it on foot in his condition seemed useless, so he accepted the woman's hospitality, went to the spare room, removed his clothes and put on the garments she supplied him with. The farmer's wife put his under garments through the wringer, and squeezed the moisture out of the others by hand, after which she hung them near the fire. By that time it was close to noon, and she had to hustle to get the dinner on the table for her husband and the two hired men.

Harry told his story to the farmer, and he

consented to lend the boy a horse to ride to Clayton Center to notify the police at that place. The young traveler took dinner with the family and an hour later his clothes were dry enough for him to put on. He mounted the horse, and provided with the direction he was to take, he started off, somewhat dubious as to the outcome of his ride. Clayton Centre was five miles away. He had covered four miles when he came up with a wagon which had broken down. It was drawn up close to the fence, and a horse was tied to a tree near it. It struck Harry that this might be the wagon he was after. While looking at it he saw something sticking in the bushes. He went to see what it was and discovered it was a mail pouch marked Exeter Novelty Co. That settled the matter.

The pouch had been slit open and its contents taken out. A second pouch, marked "S. S. Mail," lay underneath. This had also been cut open and rifled. An upper rail in the fence was down, and Harry guessed the men had abandoned the horse and the disabled wagon and gone off that way. Harry took down two more rails and led his horse into the meadow. Then mounting, he galloped across it. This brought him to another wood, a small one, and he pushed slowly through it. Suddenly he saw the outline of a house ahead. Suspecting that the men might be in hiding there, he dismounted, tied his horse and advanced toward the house on foot. The building, which was little better than a hut, a story and a half high, stood in a small clearing.

The trees came within a few feet of the rear of it, and Hal worked around to that part of it. He listened for some sound that would indicate that the hut had occupants, but he heard nothing, so he ventured to approach the only window he saw. Looking through the cracked pane, he saw three men squatting on the floor, opening packages and examining their contents. Beside each man was a pile of discarded envelopes and their written enclosures. In the center of the group was a pile of money orders, another pile of bills, and a third pile of silver coin, mostly ten-cent pieces and quarters. Harry knew at the first look that he had run the three thieves down at last.

CHAPTER VII.—The Explosion.

The men had almost finished going through the mail. The last of the registered letters were in their hands. One slot mail pouch lay over in the corner where they had thrown it after emptying out its contents. Near by was the express box, still untouched, and the boy's sample cases. Harry was afraid one of them, the fellow looking out the window, would see him, and he took his place from the window.

"What can I do against the three of them?" he said to himself. "They are stout chaps, and any one of them could handle me."

It was a problem and a serious one. He ventured to take another look. They had finished with the last envelope, and one of them was sorting out the bills, another the silver, while the third was figuring up the money orders, which were really of no use to them. Harry crept around to the other side where there was another

window, and looked in there. The man with the money orders was tying them in a bunch with a piece of string. The other two men were dividing the money in three piles. The fellow laid the money orders down, picked up the pouch and began cramming the envelopes and written sheets into it. This done, he dragged it up the steps leading to the loft and threw it there. He was gone a few minutes. When he came back he had something in his hand. It was a metallic cannister enclosed in a covering of stout wire.

"What have you got there?" asked one of his companions.

"Search me! There's a tag on it. Maybe that will explain what it is."

He looked at the tag and saw the following words printed on it in big black type:

"Handle with Care. Nitro-Glycerine. Jessup & Co."

"Holy smoke!" gasped the man.

"Take it out of the shanty! Throw it away!" roared the other, in a hurried tone and with a look of consternation which was shared by all three.

"Where'll I throw it? It might go off and arouse the neighborhood. That would bring the farm hands on the run to see what had happened. I'll bet the report would be heard in Clayton Center."

"Take it into the wood and lay it down carefully—in a hole or in the bushes. Get a move on you. It gives me the shakes to see it in your hand. If you dropped it we might all be blown to perdition."

Hal heard every word and was not a little alarmed himself. He knew the terrific explosive power of nitro-glycerine, and there was enough in the cannister, perhaps, to blow the building and all in it to pieces. He decided to get out of the way till the man had disposed of the cannister. He retired a dozen yards into the woods and waited. Suddenly a terrific explosion shattered the air. The trees shook all around the boy, and the ground trembled under him. A rush of air full of unseen power passed through the trees and staggered him. Though fifty feet from the shanty, and in a manner protected by the trees, the shock was almost heavy enough to stun the boy. The clearing was full of smoke and flying splinters of wood, and many sizable pieces of the latter were thrown around Harry.

"My gracious! I'll bet somebody has got hurt," said the young traveler, as he peered through the trees and saw the dense vapor that hung about the clearing. He couldn't see a sign of the shanty, and it struck him it had either been blown to pieces with its occupants, or else leveled with the ground.

"Heavens! If that cannister went off inside the house the men have been surely wiped out; and I guess their plunder and my sample cases have been scattered to the winds. Great smoke! What a terrible death. Why, the shock staggered me here."

The smoke gradually rose and thinned out. Then Harry ventured to investigate the situation. He walked slowly forward till he reached the edge of the clearing. Looking out, he saw that the shanty had partially collapsed and was all down on one side. The roof had come off and lay upside down on the ground. One of the

walls lay over against it, and that seemed to be the reason why the shanty had not gone entirely to pieces. As it was, the wreck was so bad that Harry did not believe the inmates could have escaped instant death. Harry was satisfied that the cannister had not exploded inside the building, for had it done so the shanty would have been scattered around the clearing, and reduced to mere kindling wood. It was then easy to see where the explosive had gone off. A great gap was torn in the trees on the other side, and a big hole showed in the ground. Fully a score of trees had suffered—some being entirely torn up and shattered, while other hung over, half uprooted, and still others were bent and broken.

"That fellow must have thrown that cannister toward the bushes, and it hit a tree and exploded," thought Harry.

He went to the hole and look at it. As his gaze swept the gap in the trees he was shocked to see a man's leg from the knee down hanging to a limb by the torn trouser's leg. That told him the fate of the fellow who had found the cannister. He had been blown to pieces on the spot where the explosion took place.

"I don't see how the thing could have gone off if he was carrying it carefully, as one would naturally handle such an article," thought Harry.

The real fact of the matter was the man's foot had caught on a ground creeper and he had been thrown violently forward. The cannister, escaping from his hands, struck a large stone and the shock did the business. The tragedy occurred so quickly that the unfortunate man never knew what happened to him. Harry went to the collapsed shanty. He was certain the other two men were in the debris, but whether dead or badly hurt he could not say. He pulled away some of the timbers and brought to light his sample cases and the express box uninjured to any extent. He pulled them out, but as the building threatened to go to pieces he was afraid to push his inspection further until help arrived, which he looked for, since the explosion was sure to have attracted a lot of attention in the vicinity, and curiosity would be rife as to the cause of it. He listened at the opening he had made, but did not hear a sound from the interior, which was ominous of the fate of those inside. In a few minutes the nearest farmer and one of his hands appeared.

"Hello, what has happened here?" asked the farmer, looking at Harry.

"You can see for yourself what has happened," replied the boy.

"There was a heavy explosion. What caused it?"

"A cannister of nitro-glycerine."

"Whew! Where were you at the time? You do not appear to be hurt."

"I was in the wood close by. I was close enough to catch a good part of the shock."

"It went off in the shanty, I suppose?"

"No, it didn't. It exploded where you see that hole in the trees and in the ground. The man who carried the cannister was blown to pieces."

"How do you know?"

"Part of a man's leg is hanging yonder, and that is pretty suggestive."

"Where?"

"I'll show you," and he took the farmer and

his hand over to the gap and pointed out the ghastly object."

While they were looking at it another farmer showed up.

"There are two men in the ruins of the shanty, but whether they are alive or not I can't say. We must dig them out," said Harry.

"Did you see the men?"

"I saw them in there before the explosion, but not since."

"I wonder where they got the nitro-glycerine. Do you know anything about it?"

"The man whose leg is hanging there found it in the attic of the shanty."

"Did you belong to this party?"

"No."

"Then how do you happen to know so much, and yet be the only one to escape?" asked the first farmer, suspiciously.

"If you want to know the truth, I was following these men."

"Following them? What for?"

"They wrecked the bridge on the outskirts of Exeter this morning, and dumped the coach in the stream. I was a passenger and followed the vehicle into the water with the driver and two other passengers. While we were extricating ourselves and the horses, these men stole the mail pouches, the express box and my sample cases—I'm a traveling salesman and was on my way to Exeter at the time. They got away with the articles in a boat, went up the stream about three-quarters of a mile or so, and transferred their plunder to a wagon they had in waiting. I learned all that by following them, though I did not come up with them at that time."

Harry told the balance of his story up to the moment the explosion occurred, and his auditors were not a little astonished.

"You will find ample proof in the ruins that my story is true, for one of the mail pouches is there with the letters. The money ought to be there, too," said Harry.

They began work on the ruins at once, and while thus engaged another man arrived on the scene. He was invited to help. The boards were carefully lifted and thrown aside. Where it became necessary to detach them extra care was used. Presently the legs of a man were exposed. The timbers were raised sufficiently to drag him out. He was not dead, but the extent of his injuries could not be told. He was unconscious and one of the farmers, after an examination, gave it as his opinion that the man was not fatally hurt. Soon afterward the second man was got out, and his condition was similar to his companion's. Harry discovered that each of the men had a bunch of money in his pocket, and he judged that represented their share of the plunder. If the balance had been on the dead man's person at the time he was blown to bits, then it was scattered to the four winds.

Possibly some of it would be found later, bit by bit, by boys or others going through that part of the wood. The wreck, however, was cleared away to enable the workers to make a thorough search of the inside of the demolished shanty. The bag full of rifled letters was found, and this confirmed Harry's statement. But this time more people had come there, and Harry had to tell his story over again to satisfy their curiosity.

One of the farmers offered to provide a wagon to carry the senseless men, the express box, Harry's cases, and the rifled pouches, for the young traveler mentioned the two pouches he had seen in the bushes along the roadside. The farmer's offer was gladly accepted by Harry, who was conceded to be the best person to assume full charge of matters.

Under his direction the two thieves and all property were carried to the farmer's house by the crowd, loaded on a light wagon, in charge of the farmer's son, and was driven to the road, where the other pouches were recovered. Harry followed on his horse, and the farmer who had loaned the wagon took charge of the horse tied to the tree in the road, and his son subsequently hauled the wagon up to their yard. Although Clayton center was but a mile away, while Exeter was all of five, and the bridge at the road was not passable, unless it had been repaired, the young traveler decided to do to the latter place, as the crime had been committed within, or at least on the edge of, that township. By going a quarter of a mile out of the way the wagon would be able to ford the stream. They started for Exeter at a good pace, Harry riding beside the wagon. When they reached the lane of the farm where Harry had got the loan of the horse, he told the farmer's son to wait till he returned the animal. The woman met him in the yard.

"You're back, I see. You didn't catch the men, I guess. What was that explosion I heard in the direction of Clayton Center?" she asked.

"Well, ma'am, I was within sixty feet or so of the spot where the explosion happened, and it was a stunner, I can tell you."

"For goodness sake! What caused it?"

"Nitro-glycerine, one of the most powerful of explosives. It blew one man to pieces."

"My gracious! Is it possible? How did you escape?"

"I haven't time to tell you the facts now. I will simply say that I caught two of the men, and have recovered the larger part of the stolen property, including my own."

"You don't say!"

"Yes, ma'am, thanks to your husband for the use of his horse. I will also tell you that the chap who was blown to bits was the third thief. One of his legs, all I could find of him, is still hanging from the branch of a tree in the wood where the nitro-glycerine went off."

"For heaven's sake!"

"Now I will say good-by. It is possible I may call on you with some small token of my appreciation for your kindness before I go back to Millville, and then I will tell you the whole story of what happened to me since I left this farm after dinner."

Harry lifted his hat, bowed and returned to the road where he found the wagon waiting for him and the two men still unconscious.

been repaired—a gang of men having been engaged on it for several hours. They drove across, and inside of ten minutes the farmer's son reined up in front of the novelty factory. Harry got down and went into the office.

"Can I see the manager?" he asked.

He was admitted to the private office, where he found a florid man of forty at his desk.

"I came to notify you that I have caught two of the three men who robbed the coach this morning of the mail bags and other property. The third man is dead," said Harry, abruptly, as the gentleman turned to him. The manager stared at him.

"You've caught two of the men! Are you connected with the police?" asked the gentleman.

"No, sir. I'm a commercial traveler, and was one of the passengers on the coach when the accident took place at the bridge. The two men are now in a wagon outside, unconscious, and I am taking them to the station-house to hand them over to the police. As they have a large part of the money they stole from the letters on their persons, I think you had better go along with us."

"I will do so," said the manager, reaching for his hat.

Room was found on the seat for him, and the wagon proceeded to the station-house. The crime had been reported hours before by the driver of the coach, and half a dozen policemen were out looking for the three men. Harry surprised the authorities when he said he had two of the thieves in the wagon outside, and that the third one was dead. The senseless men were brought into the station-house, and the police wanted to know how they came to be in that condition.

Harry told his story from beginning to end, detailing how he had gone looking for the rascals, how he obtained his first clew by seeing the broken-down wagon drawn up by the roadside, and discovered the empty pouches in the bushes; how he had followed the clew to the wood and found the three men rifling the letters in the shanty; how one of them found the cannister of nitro-glycerine in the attic, and how the finding thereof led to the explosion, his death, and the capture of the others who had not yet recovered from the effects of the shock which had brought the shanty down about their heads. Harry's story was a most unusual one, and proved he was an exceptional young chap. The factory manager declared that he had the instincts of a detective. A doctor was sent for to bring the men around, and while waiting for him the fellows' pockets were searched and the money taken possession of by the police.

"You mustn't leave town without notifying us of your intention to do so," said the captain of the police to Harry. "Where are you going to stop?"

"I don't know yet. Perhaps you'll give me a line on them."

"The Exeter House is the best—\$2.50 a day. Then there's Smith's Hotel, that's a \$2 house; and the American House, \$1 and upward, on the European plan."

"I guess I'll go to Smith's. We travelers get a rebate on the regular tariff. Where is it situated?"

"I'll show you," said the manager. "We'll pass

CHAPTER VIII.—Harry Meets A Rival

Following the road, they passed through the wood where the stream was, and in a few minutes reached the county road not far from the bridge. Here they found that the bridge had

it on the way to the post-office and express office."

The officer at the desk put down Smith's Hotel as Harry's address, and he was told a policeman would call next morning on him if the men were brought up for examination and take him to court.

"I shall probably start out early on a tour of the dealers in my line," said Harry, "but I'll make it a point to return to the hotel at any hour you name."

"If the officer calls it will be about eleven."

"All right," replied Harry, who then left the station-house with the manager of the novelty factory.

Harry left the express box at the office of the express company, and the manager was pleased to death to get it untampered with. He took down the boy's name and temporary address, and Harry also handed him a business card of his firm. Then they went on to the post-office around the corner and delivered the slit mail bags with their contents stuffed in one of them. The money orders had not been recovered, and were presumably in the pocket of the man killed by the explosion. As the man's remains were widely scattered in small pieces, the chances of the money orders ever turning up were small. The postmaster was informed that at least two-thirds of the money which had been in the registered and other letters was in the hands of the authorities, and probably would be held as evidence.

The manager of the factory said that he hoped the postmaster would have the opened letters sorted out at once so the factory could get those addressed to it. He would fill all orders except those that he could identify as having held money orders, and the senders of those he would communicate with so they could apply for duplicate orders. The postmaster listened to Harry's story, took his name and business card, and then Harry, after dismissing the farmer's son with the wagon, went to Smith's Hotel and registered. Supper being ready, he went to the dining-room and partook of it. After the meal he went to the reading-room and wrote a long letter to Elsie Carter, describing his experience of the day. Before he was half through a visitor called to see him. This was a reporter of the Exeter Times, who was after his story.

Harry submitted to be interviewed, after which the young scribe invited him out to take a drink. Harry politely refused to imbibe, as he never drank strong liquors.

"Take a cigar, then," said the newspaper man.

"I don't smoke, either."

"Upon my word, you're something unusual in the traveling salesman line. How do you get along? Many of the people you deal with expect to be treated. If there is any business where drinking is a part of the game, it seems to me it's the traveling salesman. I've met lots of them—mostly jolly good fellows—and I fail to recall one who didn't hold his end up at the bar. A fellow can hardly be sociable if he does not drink or smoke," said the reporter.

"Well, I've managed to get along so far without patronizing a saloon," replied Harry. "And I shall try and continue along the same lines. I don't find any fault with other people for drinking if they wish to do so, but with respect to

myself it is against my principles and tastes. If I can't make things go without having to drink, I'll quit the business and take to something else."

That wound up the interview and Harry went on with his letter. Then feeling tired, he went to bed. After an early breakfast he started out on his round. He found Exeter a town of more importance than he had anticipated. As the town was not down on his route, knowing that no other traveler for his firm had been there, he had no list of dealers in his line to guide him. He got over that by consulting a business directory, published in Millville, and taking in Exeter and one or two other places of similar size. As the morning daily printed a graphic account of his experience with, and capture of, the coach thieves, giving him the full credit of running the men down, and recovering the larger part of their plunder, he was recognized at each place he visited, and as a result he did three times as much business as he otherwise would have done.

In consequence, his visit to Exeter was a big success, and he did not mind the necessity of remaining over to appear against the two rascals. He returned to the hotel at eleven, met the policeman who was waiting for him, and accompanied him to the court. The two rascals had recovered from the shock they experienced, and were brought before the bar to plead. As their last recollection was association with the shanty in the woods, they naturally were surprised to find themselves in the hands of the police when they regained their senses. How this misfortune had come about they did not learn until they heard Harry's story in the witness chair after they had pleaded "not guilty." Then the matter was plain to them, and their feelings toward the young traveler were anything but friendly.

The magistrate held them for trial and they were sent back to jail. After dinner Harry continued his round and, as we have remarked, he did a good business. The next day was Sunday, and as the coach did not run, the young traveler found he would have to remain in Exeter till Monday afternoon unless he hired a private conveyance to take him to Millville. As he had received an invitation from the manager of the factory to dine at his house, Harry did not worry about leaving the town, particularly as there were a number of small stores where he expected to pull off some cash sales on Monday morning. After breakfast next morning Harry went out for a walk. He found the town as dead as a village.

There was absolutely nothing doing except at the churches. Even the side doors of the saloons were hermetically sealed, as were also the barber shops. As soon as he left the business section he found himself surrounded by private residences strung along tree-lined streets. The general aspect of the residential section was that of a large village. He extended his walk to the White farm, where he had borrowed the horse to chase the thieves. In his pocket he carried one of his watches for the farmer, another for his son, and a number of pieces of cheap but attractive looking jewelry for Mrs. White. He received a hearty welcome, and was regarded as something of a hero, for the family had read the story of his exploit in the town paper. He was pressed to

remain to dinner, but declined owing to his previous engagement.

The farmer's son, however, hitched up the buggy and drove him back to his hotel. At two o'clock he presented himself at the manager's house and took dinner there, remaining till dark. Next morning he finished up the town and was ready to take the coach back at three. He rode all the way with the driver, who was under censure for having lost the mail pouches. He took the evening local for Danville, his next stopping point on his regular route, reached that place about ten o'clock, and registered at the Danville Hotel. This place was a fair-sized city and boasted three theaters, besides other places of amusement. There were a number of drummers at the hotel, and among the bunch was a man of thirty, named Alex Judson, in a similar line to Harry.

He had just arrived, too, and finding an acquaintance at the hotel was drinking with him in the bar when Harry reached the house. Judson was a shifty individual, but an experienced salesman. He and Harry came together at a large wholesale establishment on the principal street next morning. Judson took a look at the young traveler and asked him if he was selling goods, rather a superfluous question, as the boy's sample case spoke for him.

"Yes," replied Harry, pleasantly. "You're a drummer, too?"

"I am. There isn't any use of you waiting here; Jenkins always buys from me."

This was a pure bluff, as Judson had only sold one small order at that store before. It was a trick to get rid of his young rival, who looked bright and smart, and might cut into his opportunity to do business with the proprietor, for as Harry was on hand first he was entitled to the first interview. It didn't work.

"Well, as I've called, I intend to see Mr. Jenkins," said the young traveler. "I have unusually good things, and I hope to interest him in them."

"You'll only waste your breath. How long have you been on the road?"

"This is my first trip."

"I thought so. You look pretty verdant. Jenkins hasn't any time to waste on guys like you. You'll save time by moving on."

Harry made no reply. He had no intention of moving on till he saw the boss of the house. On a shelf in the waiting-room stood a case of the best grade of cheap watches. A clerk had left them there because the proprietor was engaged, and went to wait on a customer. Judson, finding Harry wasn't going to move, got up and looked at the different articles on the shelves. He looked into the case holding the watches, and sized up their value. Then he walked to the door and looked into the store. At that moment the visitor in the private room came out and Harry went in.

CHAPTER IX.—The Stolen Case of Watches.

Harry introduced himself to Mr. Jenkins, opened his sample case, and got down to business. It happened that the proprietor of the store was shy on the line of goods Harry had to offer, and as they appealed to him, he gave the boy a liberal order.

"Thank you, sir," said Harry, after Jenkins had signed the order—the biggest single one the young traveler had taken so far on his trip. "This will be a great help to me."

"You are new to the road, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"I guess you'll get along all right, for you're full of business."

"The man outside who is waiting to see you, and is in the same line as myself, told me I would only lose my time trying to do business with you. He said you never wasted any of your time with new drummers."

"He was trying to get you out of the way," smiled Jenkins, who was wise to the ways of traveling men.

"I never take those kind of tips," laughed the boys. "If I did I wouldn't do much business where I had a rival."

"That's right," nodded the man. "You've got ahead of this one. I have bought about all I want of your line of goods. I don't think I will be able to do any business with this competitor of yours."

"He told me you always bought from him."

Jenkins got up, went to the door and looked into the waiting-room. He recognized Judson as a man he had done some business with, though not a whole lot. He didn't like the man much, and was not predisposed to do any more with him.

"Oh, that's Alex Judson," he said, walking back to his desk. "When he told you I always bought from him he did not tell the truth. I bought one order from him, and the goods were not wholly satisfactory. I shall do nothing with him now."

"You'll find Hatch & Co.'s goods just what I represented them to be, for you have bought from their regular line of standard articles. I carry a cheaper grade, too, but they are not warranted, and I sell them only for cash in the villages, and to retail storekeepers. I wouldn't show them to you."

Harry then took his leave and Judson walked in. He walked out soon afterward, much disgusted, for Jenkins told him he had purchased all the goods he wanted from his young rival. He remained in the waiting-room a few minutes and then left, with a mental resolve to get square with the boy traveler. In the meantime Harry went on to the next wholesale house in his line and captured an order there. Judson followed him and was turned down. He swore under his breath when he learned that the boy had been there. Judson would have met Harry in the next store if he hadn't stopped to drink and waste time in a corner saloon. He would have stood a good show to have got ahead of Harry in that store, because the proprietor was prejudiced against boys as drummers, and it took a great deal of tact and genial talk on Harry's part to overcome his objection.

Having the field entirely to himself, he finally succeeded in selling the man a bill of goods. After he had departed for the next house, Judson came along and did nothing: Harry cleaned up his regular order business by three o'clock and then went out with both cases. He returned to the hotel at seven and got his supper. When

he came out two men were standing near the desk talking to Judson.

"There he is now," said Judson, pointing to Harry.

The two men went up to him.

"Your name is Harry Green?" said the one with a chin beard.

"Yes, sir," replied the boy, wondering who the men were.

"You're a drummer for Hatch & Co., of Chicago?"

"That's right."

"You called at the store of William Jenkins this morning after an order?"

"Yes."

"I am the chief salesman of that place."

"Well?"

"You were alone in the waiting-room for a while before you saw Mr. Jenkins?"

"Yes, sir; about ten minutes, then another salesman in my line came in—a man named Judson. I left him there when I went into the private office."

"While you were in the waiting-room did you see a case of engineers' watches on one of the shelves?"

"No, sir; I didn't notice it. There were quite a number of things on the shelves."

"This particular case was by itself."

"I don't remember seeing it. I didn't go near the shelves at all. Mr. Judson did. He might have noticed the case of watches. There's the gentleman talking to the clerk at the desk."

Judson was called over.

"This young man says he didn't go near the shelves, but that you did," said the Jenkins salesman.

"He's a liar," said Judson, hotly. "I saw him monkeying with that case of watches, and if it's missing I'll bet he took them and slipped them under his coat."

"How dare you make such a statement, Mr. Judson?" demanded Harry, angrily. "You know it is false."

"You can't sneak out of it that way, you young geezer. If I were you folks I'd search his cases and his trunk."

"I have no objection, but to make the thing fair they ought to search yours, too."

"They shall do it, if only to show what a liar you are."

"I haven't accused you of taking anything. All I said was you were inspecting the shelves in Mr. Jenkins' waiting-room."

"You said that to implicate me. I didn't go near the shelves."

"I am ready to swear that you did."

"You'd swear to anything to get out of your predicament."

"Gentlemen, if you will show me your authority to act in this matter I'll let you examine my sample cases and also my trunk. The latter is in the store-room."

"I told you I was Mr. Jenkins' chief salesman. My name is Jones. This man is a detective. Show him your badge," said the man with the chin whiskers.

The officer did so.

"Very well," said Harry. "If you suspect me of stealing a case of watches, or anything else

from Mr. Jenkins store, I shall be glad to prove that I didn't."

Harry got his sample cases, opened them and let the two men look them over. Nothing was found in them that did not belong there.

"He wouldn't have them in his sample cases," said Judson. "Look in his trunk. That's the place to find them, if anywhere."

The porter was called to open the store-room. Harry pointed out his trunk among several there and handed the key to Salesman Jones. That man unlocked the trunk. The upper tray was filled with clothes. These were carefully lifted out and the space underneath examined. A flat case, twelve by eighteen, lay revealed. Judson swooped down upon it. He opened it and exposed a dozen new watches. Harry was amazed. The missing jewelry was in his trunk. Judson grabbed him.

"You young thief!" he bellowed. "I've caught you with the goods. It's jail for yours now."

"I am afraid, young man, you are guilty," said Salesman Jones.

"I know nothing about that case of watches or the other articles you have found. I could not have put them in my trunk, for I have not been near the store-room to-day. The porter will tell you that," protested Harry.

"This porter hasn't been on duty all day," said Judson.

"Yes, I have," said the man. "This young man wasn't in the store-room to-day, but you were. And I guess you know how that case of watches got in his trunk."

"What's that?" roared Judson, turning color.

"I let you in the store-room after dinner."

"What of it?"

"You sent me upstairs for a sheet of paper."

"Well, what if I did. You brought it to me."

"I guess I came back quicker'n you thought. I saw you putting that case in that trunk. I didn't think anything of it, for I supposed the trunk was yours. Now I know it belongs to that young chap, and as you've accused him of stealing that case of watches, I guess you've put up the job on him to get him in trouble. That's the whole story."

"You infernal liar!" howled Judson, launching out his fist and knocking the porter down.

"Hold on," said the detective, seizing him.

The man sprang up and rushed at Judson. The officer stopped him.

"The man is a liar," said Judson. "How could I get into that chap's trunk without a key?"

"I saw you toss something into that corner," said the porter. "Maybe it was the key you used."

He rushed over to the corner, and in a moment came back with a new key, which he held up.

"See if that fits the trunk," he said.

It was found to fit the lock perfectly.

"What have you got to say about this man's accusation!" asked the detective of Judson.

"What I said before—that he's a liar."

"Gentlemen, wasn't it this man Judson who accused me in the first place?" said Harry.

They admitted it was.

"Wasn't it he who proposed that my trunk be searched?"

"Yes," said Jones.

"Hasn't he shown animosity toward me right along in this matter?"

There was no doubt about that.

"Then, gentlemen, I leave you to judge, in the face of the porter's statement, which of us took those watches from the Jenkins store."

"I will take you both, with the porter, to the station-house and let the captain pass on the matter," said the sleuth.

Judson protested that it was an outrage to suspect him. The whole party went to the station-house, and the case was laid before the captain.

"It's a case for the magistrate," he said, and ordered both Harry and Judson to be locked up.

As neither traveler had any acquaintance in town he could appeal to for bail, they seemed doomed to remain there all night. The porter, however, who was dead sore on Judson, determined to secure the boy's release if he could. He returned to the hotel, interviewed the proprietor, swore that Harry was innocent of the charge of theft, and was the victim of a put-up job on Judson's part, and asked his boss to get him out on bail. The proprietor decided to do so, and an hour later Harry was free, but Judson experienced no such luck. After hearing all the testimony, he discharged Harry and held Judson for trial. Thus the rascally drummer was hoist by his own petard, as the saying is.

CHAPTER X.—Number Thirteen.

Harry was very well pleased with his success at Danville. He was even better pleased to receive a letter from Elsie Carter when he returned from the police court to get his dinner. The clerk handed it to him as he was passing toward the dining-room. He read it at the table while waiting to be served. The young lady acknowledged his first letter from Exeter, containing his account of his exploit in connection with the mail pouch thieves. She complimented him on his conduct, and added that she was proud to number him among her most particular friends. She said she hoped his trip would be successful in every way, and hinted that her father was particularly anxious to do something for him.

"I shall be delighted if you accept whatever offer my father makes to you when you get back here," she wrote. "I am sure you will find it greatly to your advantage. I would like you to take a position in his store, for then I could see you often, but, of course, if you prefer to continue on the road, it isn't for me to make any objection. In that event, my father will give you a route that should pay you finely."

After dinner Harry made calls on the retail trade and sold a considerable part of his own stock.

"I wish I could do as well in every town as I have done here," Harry said to himself. "I'd make money fast."

He visited several of the outlying villages, but they did not pan out well, so he was glad to pull up stakes and continue on. Three weeks passed and Harry reached Clinton City, which was as far as he was going westward. From there he was to work back to Chicago over another route. When he registered at the Planter's Hotel he

found a package from his firm. It contained several enclosures. First, a letter from the head of the firm, complimenting him on his showing up to that point. Secondly, a letter bearing the express company's imprint, addressed to him in care of his firm in Chicago, and containing an official recognition for his services in recovering the express box at Exeter, together with a check for \$250. Thirdly, an official letter from the post-office department at Washington, commending his services in recovering most of the stolen money and securing the arrest of the thieves, and enclosing a check for \$500, payable to his order at once of the Government bank depositories in Chicago.

"That little adventure has paid me well, after all," Harry told himself, as he looked at the two checks. "I'll be able to start a bank account when I get back."

Clinton was the biggest place he had visited yet, and he hoped to do a first-rate business there. He found, however, that a rival drummer had preceded him, and he did not do half as well as he expected during the two days' canvass he made for orders. He was much disappointed. When he started around among the small stores with his own stock he did very much better, but he realized there was more peddling to it than anything else. However, as it turned him in a handsome profit, he had no kick coming.

Harry signalized his last night in town by going to a show. The performance was a long one, and the curtain did not fall till nearly midnight. When he came out on the street he started, as he thought, in the direction of his hotel, but found after a while that he had taken the wrong direction. In trying to correct this, his unfamiliarity with the town got him more mixed up. He was passing down a dark and silent short street one block in length, lined with substantial looking private houses, when the door of one of them opened and two men in evening dress came out. They nearly ran into him, and Harry said, "I beg your pardon," in his usual polite way, and was continuing on when one of the men, hurrying after him, caught him by the arm and said:

"Are you in a great hurry to get home, young man?"

"Well, as it's after midnight, and I'm going to leave town by an early train in the morning, I think I ought to get back to my hotel as soon as possible. Being a stranger here—I'm a commercial traveler, and this is my first visit to Clinton—I've got mixed up, and if you would direct me right I'd consider it a favor."

"What hotel are you stopping at?"

"The Planter's."

"You are walking away from it. It is ten blocks over yonder. But I say, we would like you to do us a favor if you don't mind putting in an hour having a good time and a big feed."

"What is the favor?"

"Joining our dinner party."

"Why should I do that? In what way would that be a favor to you?"

"Well, the fact is we are members of the Thirteen Club."

"The Thirteen Club!"

"Exactly. Quite an exclusive organization. I assure you. We give a dinner on the 13th of each

month. This is the 13th of this month, and the dinner is all ready to be served, but, unfortunately, a difficulty has presented itself that has unset all our arrangements."

"What is the difficulty?"

"One of our number was taken suddenly ill on his way to the club and had to be taken home. That leaves us a party of only twelve, and to sit down to our regular banquet one member short of the magical number would not only spoil all precedent, but would doubtless lead to the disruption of our organization."

"And how can I help you out?"

"By joining us—becoming No. 13, in fact. You are not superstitious, are you? We aim to hit the old superstition that 13 is an unlucky number in the solar plexus. We have been organized exactly one year, lacking perhaps half an hour, and this is our twelfth dinner. The superstition says that if thirteen people sit down at table together one of them will surely die within the year. Nothing like that has occurred so far. In thirty minutes the year will have elapsed, and we will have demonstrated the folly of putting faith in that popular superstition, besides driving a nail into a few others that we have arranged to do up. As it will be practically impossible for us to secure the thirteenth man we stand so greatly in need of, unless you will accommodate us by your presence, we trust you will not refuse to honor us with your society," said the man.

Harry hesitated. He would not admit that he was superstitious with respect to the number 13. We are not prepared to affirm or deny the fact. As he was their only hope, the two men seized him, one by each arm, and urged him toward the house from which they had come. If the Thirteen Club was about to hold one of its monthly dinners there, no evidence of the fact was apparent on the outside. The building was as dark and somber looking at that hour as all the other houses in the block. Before Harry realized it he was being led up the short flight of steps that connected with the front door. Having accompanied the well-dressed men that far, he had tacitly accepted their invitation to become No. 13 for this occasion, and he felt that it would look bad for him to balk now. A pass-key admitted them into a dark hall, and the door closed behind them.

The party proceeded down the hall in deep darkness. Then a door was pushed open and the sudden transition to a brightly lighted room dazzled the young traveler. He shut his eyes and stopped short.

"Ah, you have secured No. 13," said a deep-toned voice.

"We have, and he seems to have no special reverence for the number, as he offered no opposition to coming with us," said one of Harry's companions.

"Gentlemen," said the deep-toned voice, "we will do No. 13 the honor of placing him at the head of the table in recognition of the service he is doing us. Is there any objection?"

"None?" came in chorus from a number of voices.

Then Harry opened his eyes and found himself in a large room in the center of which was a table laid out with silver, cut-glass and flowers,

with the other things necessary to a well-appointed party. The men in full dress were standing in small knots about the apartment. Harry and his conductors made up the required thirteen. The boys was led to the head of the table and the others took their places standing.

"Gentlemen," said Harry, "this is an unexpected surprise to me. As I appear to be a necessary guest, you will have to excuse my lack of attire. It isn't my fault that I appear before you in a garb different from your own."

"Say no more, young man, no excuse is required under the circumstances," said the deep-toned voice. "Gentlemen, be seated. It lacks but five minutes of the time that completes our first year. Not one of our number has died, and so we may congratulate ourselves on having downed one very foolish bugaboo."

As the last word escaped his lips and the servants entered with the first course—the soup—a loud ring came at the bell.

"Who can that be?" said the man with the deep-toned voice, who appeared to be the guiding spirit of the club.

A servant entered with a salver and presented him with a note. He took it, but as he read it his face changed color.

"Is this a message from our absent and temporarily afflicted brother?" said one of the club members who sat opposite.

"It is nothing, nothing that need interfere with our dinner" said the gentleman, putting the note in his vest pocket.

As he sat down he glanced at the clock and saw that it was just one. The year had expired, but the superstition had done its work, for the note had conveyed word that the member who was taken ill on his way to the club had died on the stroke of midnight.

Nevertheless it made no difference to the Thirteen Club apparently, as the dinner was proceeded with. At the end each member gave Harry a memento of his presence on that occasion, besides which a paper was handed him by the president, who stated it was sent by the member he represented, who had died on the stroke of 12 of the clock.

The club soon adjourned and No. 1 of the Thirteen Club accompanied Harry as far as the Planter's Hotel. The next morning Harry was again on his way. After leaving Decatur Harry hired a horse and proceeded to Ridgefield. He soon came to a large house which seemed to be deserted. Harry determined to stop there, as a storm was coming up. He dismounted and tried the door. It was locked. He then went to a large barn back of the house. The door was open and he entered. Soon the storm came and with it tremendous thunder and lightning. He shut the door and was peeking out of knothole in the side of the barn toward the house, when, as a flash of lightning came, he saw the face of a hard-looking man peering out of one of the windows of the house.

"There's some one in the house, after all," muttered Harry. "And a hard looking character."

The storm appeared to let up all of a sudden, and Harry went out the barn door just as a tremendous flash of lightning came and a belt struck the house before him, sending brick and clapboards flying in the air. Across a large rent in

the side of the house hung a human figure in shirt sleeves and pants.

"It must be the man I saw in the window, and he's probably killed by that awful bolt," said Harry.

CHAPTER XI.—Conclusion.

Harry rushed toward the house. The sky had already lightened up considerably, and was growing lighter every moment. When the young traveler reached the jagged hole in the house he saw something bright in the wreckage. Stopping, he pulled it out and discovered it to be a tin box such as householders and office people keep valuable papers in. Laying the box aside, Harry crawled into the ground floor from over the wreck of the brick chimney. An open door in the vacant room let him out into the main hall where the front stairs were. Up the stairs he ran and, reaching the landing, found his way into the room where the figure lay by the jagged opening once occupied by the upper part of the chimney. One look at the hard looking, gaunt face, with three weeks' growth of reddish beard adding to its uncouthness, told Harry that it was the face he had seen at the window, and that the man was stone dead.

His shirt was ripped open to the waist, and one trouser leg cut as clean as if by a sharp knife, and the shoe on that foot was torn to pieces. A blue mark ran down his chest, marking the course of the lightning.

"He looks like a tramp who had taken refuge in the building," thought the boy. "Well, he has met his fate here. It is a case for the coroner of the county, and I had better not disturb him."

As it might be some hours before the coroner viewed him, Harry, knowing that dead bodies stiffen rapidly, composed the man's limbs, bound up his falling jaw with a piece from his shirt, and, closing each eye, placed a small piece of brick on them. He then took a rapid survey of the upper part of the house and found it completely bereft of furniture. The lower part was in the same condition. Only the stove remained in the kitchen.

"It is lucky no one else was in the house. Had I taken refuge from the storm in it there is no telling how I would have come out between the man and the thunderbolt. I don't like the look on the man's face, and I wouldn't have fancied him as a companion," said Harry as he crawled out of the building.

Then he thought of the tin box and picked it up.

"Seems funny this box should have been in this vacant house," he said.

It was not heavy, and when he shook it he felt something light inside.

"There are papers in this box. I don't believe the box belonged to the dead man. Maybe the owner or one of his family placed it in the chimney for safe keeping, and in the hurry of moving overlooked it. I'll take it to town and see if I can find a claimant for it."

Harry mounted his horse and reached the town without further adventure. He took the tin box to his room and left it there, then he went to supper. After supper he went to the

station-house and notified the authorities that a man, struck by a lightning bolt, lay dead in the big vacant house on the road to Ridgefield. He explained the circumstances under which he had made the gruesome discovery.

"That's the Risdon Homestead," said the officer. "It's tied up in court. Old Risdon made a will leaving the property to his second wife, a young woman, but the document could not be found at the time of his death, though the old man's lawyer, who represents her interests, declared he had drawn it up, and that it was witnessed in proper form. The witnesses testified to the same effect. The old man has a good-for-nothing son, by his first wife, whom he practically disinherited. This man is fighting for his legal share of the property on the ground that his father died intestate. He will undoubtedly win unless the will turns up. The wife fears that a servant, working in the son's interest, found the will and gave it to him, in which case he, of course, has destroyed it. All these facts in detail were printed in the morning papers a few weeks ago."

"What kind of looking man is this son?" asked Harry, with a suspicion in his mind.

"A sandy-featured chap of average height and build."

"Your description fits the corpse now lying in the house," said the boy.

"The dickens you say!" ejaculated the officer. "What was he doing there?"

"Don't ask me, for I couldn't tell you. Perhaps he was hunting for the will," said Harry, thinking of the tin box.

"That's so," said the officer. "Well, his death won't alter the situation much, for he has a wife and family, and they will succeed to his rights."

"Under the law, as the case stands, how much is the widow entitled to?"

"Her dowry rights only, I believe, though I don't know for certain."

"Do you know who her lawyer is? I should like to call on him."

"I don't recall his name. You can find it out, with his address, at the office of one of the two morning papers. He has offered a reward of \$2,000 for the will, which I believe has been increased since."

"All right. Notify the coroner to take charge of the dead man, whoever he is."

"I will. By the way, I want your name and address."

"Harry Green, commercial traveler, Decatur House."

The officer wrote it down, and Harry left the station-house. He went to the office of the Decatur Tribune, a few doors away, and made his way to the editorial room. There he got the information he wanted. The lawyer's name was John Hall, and his office was at No. 150 Washington street, the main street of the town. Harry also learned that the reward had been increased to \$5,000, because the judge was expected to hand down his decision soon, and the lawyer knew it would be against his client. He was, therefore, making a strenuous effort to either bring the will to light, or secure information that would show it was deliberately destroyed by the person most interested in keeping it out of sight. The morning papers contained an account of the

partial destruction of the Risdon Homestead by a thunderbolt, and the death through the same agency of the son of old man Risdon, the contestant for his property.

Not a word appeared about the tin box. Harry had been interviewed by a reporter from each of the papers at the hotel the evening before, and he told his story frankly, omitting all reference to the tin box he had found. His name, of course, appeared in the newspaper stories as the eyewitness of the tragedy. About ten o'clock Harry appeared at the lawyer's office with the tin box. He was admitted to the private room.

"I presume, sir, you have read what the papers printed this morning about the Risdon Homestead?" said Harry, after introducing himself.

"I have," nodded the lawyer, eyeing his curiously.

"I am the party who is mentioned in the papers in connection with the matter. I furnished the details to the reporters, and notified the police of the man's death."

"Ah, indeed."

"I hold back an important fact."

"What is that?"

"Something that may prove of interest to you and your client, the widow, of the late owner."

"Ha! Has it something to do with the missing will?" said the lawyer, with fresh and eager interest.

"I think it has."

"Let me know at once. I have offered a reward of \$5,000 for the discovery of the will or information in connection with it. Perhaps you may win it."

"I hope so. I found this tin box in the wreck of the chimney," and Harry laid the box on the lawyer's desk. He pounced upon it with avidity.

"This is the missing box in which the old man kept his private papers. I have no doubt I shall find the will in it. If I do I will pay you the reward."

A locksmith was sent for, and while waiting for him to come with his tools, Harry told how he found the box, together with much not recorded by the papers bearing indirectly on the issue at hand. The locksmith came, opened the box and the will was found in it, together with other important documents, such as the insurance policy on the homestead, and the policy for \$3,000 on old Risdon's life. When Harry left the office he carried the lawyer's check for \$5,000, payable to his order. The recovery of the will and the other papers were duly chronicled in the afternoon papers, and Harry again appeared in the limelight in connection therewith. The morning paper reporters, on reading these fresh facts, were much disgruntled with Harry for keeping the information back, so that the afternoon papers got the full benefit of the news.

Harry collected the money, bought a draft on Chicago with it, and put the draft in his trunk with the two checks from the express company and the Government, which he would collect when

he reached the Windy City. This affair ended Harry's adventures on that trip, and two weeks later he got off the train in Chicago and went to the boarding-house he had lived at before going on the road for Hatch & Co. His first duty was to report to his firm; his next to call on Mr. Carter at his store, where he received a cordial welcome. Before he left the presence of that gentleman he had made a very satisfactory arrangement with him to go on the road for the house in the fall. That evening he called at the Carter home, on Prairie avenue, to see Elsie, who gave him a rousing reception. He met her mother for the first time, and received that lady's grateful thanks for the services he had rendered her daughter.

He and Elsie spent a fine evening together, and when he left it was after promising to call on her at least once a week until he went on the road for her father. Next day Harry distributed \$6,000 among the best Chicago savings banks, and felt quite rich for a boy who a few months since had left Chicago on his first trip as a drummer with all his surplus cash invested in cheap auction goods bought of the firm he had signed with to take orders. During the few weeks he remained in Chicago he spent a great deal of his time in Elsie's company, not only visiting her, but taking her around to one amusement resort or another. Her parents offered no objection to the growing intimacy between Elsie and Harry, though the boy was not in the same social swim. Mr. Carter saw that he possessed the elements that make a successful man, and he was confident the boy would rise to the top of the ladder in time.

When the time came, Harry started out for the Carter firm as one of their travelers, and he proved a great success in taking orders. We have not the space to follow his career, as experience broadened his capabilities in his chosen calling, but we will simply say that he merited the excellent opinion Mr. Carter had formed of him, and in due time was accepted as the favored suitor for his daughter's hand. After his marriage to Elsie he was admitted to the firm as junior partner, but he still went on the road, taking his wife with him. They proved a very congenial couple, and the only fault Elsie ever had to find with him was that perhaps he was too full of business.

Next week's issue will contain "BAFFLING THE BROKERS; or, THE BOY WITH THE IRON NERVE."

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CURRENT NEWS

NUGGETS UNDER SKELETON START
GOLD RUSH

A small bottle of gold nuggets found under the skeleton of a man discovered in the woods near Bothell, twenty miles from Seattle, Wash., has started a stampede for placer claims on creeks and rivers there, and some pans of color are the rule. The man had been dead eight or ten years. At his side were the remnants of pan, pick and shovel.

CAT HATCHES CHICKENS

A house cat belonging to Mrs. Fred Loomis of Perrysburg, O., is the wonder of the town. The cat has just hatched out two chickens. The other day Mrs. Loomis heard a noise coming from the cat's nest. She investigated and found two baby chicks. Her theory is that a hen used the cat's nest for her nest, while the cat furnished the incubation. Anyway, Mrs. Cat is puzzled over her new family.

LARGE TOTEM POLE

The largest totem pole ever carved was shipped from a quarry near Langley, Wash., recently to Alaska by its maker, A. C. Thompson.

It was ordered a year ago by a wealthy Indian who has large cannery holdings at Petersburg. The rock totem is to grace the last resting place

of Ru Keidesti, an ex-chief of the Thlinket Alaska Indians.

The totem was made from granite, is 9 feet 6 inches high, carved to resemble a cedar totem, with the inscription and figures to represent the past traditions and history of the Salmon and Bear tribes who once dominated the North coast.

ILLEGAL FISHING

Columbia River is as much a river of mystery, of adventure and of romance, even though the romance be unrecognized by the stern eye of the law, as it ever was.

Deputy John Larson of the State Fish Warden force, State Department of Fisheries, vouches for the mystery at all events. Larson patrols the river from Astoria to Multnomah Falls, twenty-five miles above Portland, in the patrol boat Governor Olcott. He believes illicit fishing is going on, but admits the fishermen have a clever system of evading detection.

Flashing signal lights from river bluffs warn of the approach of suspicious craft, even as the signal fire of pioneer days advertised for the suspicious Indian the approach of the white man's birch. According to Larson, the signal may be a blazing bunch of newspapers of a spotlight, but when he gets there the quarry has departed for safer waters.

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Daring Dan Dobson

— OR —

THE BOY WHO BEAT THE MOONSHINERS

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

His own gun was out in a jiffy and was barking away in the direction of the judge.

But that gentleman had skilfully swung himself around a handy door.

Men came running in all directions, and the judge stepped out, with his weapon before him, and a grim smile on his clear-cut face.

"I'm going to kill the first man who raises his hand against me," declared he, "and this is my start. Now, you'd better take Newcastle out of here, or I'll finish the job."

In reality, they could doubtless have overwhelmed the Easterner, had they tried. But it was certain that he had two or three shots at least for any one who would attempt to quiet him.

And it was those two or three shots which caused the men to ponder and hesitate before applying for the honor of being martyrs for Jake Newcastle's benefit.

The judge reached down and snatched up the revolver which had fallen from the wounded man's hand.

"Now—he's only punctured in his leg—he will get worse if he makes any more threats against me or my daughter. Here, Mr. Proprietor, I want this man cleared out of here, and I would like to pay my bill and leave the first thing in the morning."

The owner of the miserable hotel was overwhelmed.

He was "between the devil and the deep blue sea," as the saying goes.

He feared Newcastle and he liked the judge, who had been courteous, and was showing a remarkable development of temper.

The men solved the question by taking Newcastle from the place to some house, where his leg was bound up, and he called a meeting of his neighbors to arrange a vengeance.

The judge went up to his room, to calm his daughter, whom he found sobbing nervously.

"Oh, father, I was afraid that you had been hurt or injured," she began.

"Never mind now. I taught that Newcastle a lesson, and I am ready for developments. He told me, by the way, that young Dobson had gone back to his home town. There may be some truth in that."

"Oh, poor fellow, I hope it's so," was Beryl's instant answer. "He's so brave—he deserves success."

The judge barricaded the room, and sat down

to watch for trouble, tilting himself back in an old-fashioned rocking chair, by the window, with the lights out.

His daughter finally went to sleep, with her father's reassuring watchfulness to calm her.

No harm came to them that night, although the trickeries of Newcastle were not through.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, at this same time, Dan Dobson was feeling his way along the dark, rough road, back to the farmhouse, where his party was resting, unconscious of his own adventure.

Dan reached the place, and picked his steps as best he could around the house, toward where he knew the barn to be.

He heard the horses stamping nervously in the stable, as though alarmed at something.

"That scoundrel is trying to hamstring or poison those horses as sure as shooting!" he exclaimed under his breath, as he noted this.

Quick as his thought, he sprang forward to a run, and in a jiffy reached the barn. The door was open, and Dan daringly rushed into the dark doorway.

He encountered a man's figure at once, and there was a scuffle.

"Let me go, or I'll stick this knife inter ye!" hissed his opponent.

Dan believed him, for there was a sudden pain in his left arm.

"Not yet!" grunted Dan, as he managed to club his revolver and bring it down on the fellow with a resounding whack.

The man gave a cry of pain, and tried to wriggle away from Dan's hold.

But the determined youth was ready and active.

He took his good chance.

The wriggle gave him a hold on the fellow's arms, and Dan pulled them behind in "double-hammer throw" by which a man's arm can be broken if the holder desires.

"Hey, fellows. Hey, Tom Dingle!" yelled Dan, lustily, to his friends in the house.

The call woke them up, and there was a rush of men out toward the barn in a minute or two.

"What's the matter?"

"Where are ye?"

"Here I am," responded Dan. "I've got a man who was trying to hamstring the horses. Somebody bring a lantern so we can see better."

This was done, and Tom finally released his prisoner, who sprang up to face a half dozen gun-barrels pointed at his heart.

"Ye're all robbers!" cried the owner of the farmhouse. "I'll have a law on ye."

"No, you won't," said the sheriff, "for I represent the law. Let's see the hosses, Dan. What makes you accuse him?"

Our hero then related the experience, and the story of the escaped girl, who had gone to spread the news of their approach to Newcastle's region.

(To be continued.)

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

QUEER STAMP COUNTERFEITERS

A conspiracy through which the Government has been defrauded of large sums by wholesale distribution of counterfeit postage stamps was disclosed by treasury agents as a result of the arrest in Milwaukee, Wis., of a girl known as the "Queen of the Counterfeiters."

Arrests of ringleaders in the East are expected as a result of the revelations.

Counterfeit postage stamps have been distributed over the country, it was learned, and large mail order houses are said to have been swindled of thousands of dollars.

The stamps are believed to have been printed in several denominations, the principal ones being two-cent and one-cent stamps.

FACTS ABOUT THE GIANT RAY

The great devilfish or giant ray, which abounds in the waters around Beaufort, S. C., and Captiva Inlet, Fla., has occasionally been found off New York and New Jersey. The furthest north it has ever been taken is Block Island, where one was caught in the last week of last August.

This is fourteen feet wide between the tips of the pectoral fins, seven feet long from head to base of tail, and weighed 1,686 pounds. This is the only specimen known to have been weighed, but there are stories of fish that are said to have weighed 10,000 pounds.

Dr. E. W. Gudger of the American Museum of Natural History writes of the giant ray in Science, and says that naturalists who have described it differ as to whether it has a large spine or sting on its tail. The one caught at Block Island had none, but there was a wound on the tail where a spine was said to have been torn off. The late Theodore Gill, dean of American ichthyologists, doubted the spine, as have other writers, although some naturalists picture it with one.

SPEED OF FINGERS DIFFER IN HANDS

The fingers of your right hand are quicker and more accurate than those of your left, says the Popular Science Monthly.

The ring finger of your left hand shows a burst of speed whenever it can work with the forefinger of your right hand; and it slows down noticeably when it must team with the middle finger of your left hand.

Two fingers working together are faster than one going it alone. And a combination of two fingers on opposite hands is faster than two fingers on the same hand.

Practice, while it increases the speed of all fingers, tends to increase the rate of the slow ones more than the fast ones, thus overcoming the handicap of the ones that lag naturally.

If you are a typist or pianist, perhaps you have already discovered some of these facts about the workings of your hands. They have been conclusively demonstrated recently by a series of tests conducted at the Carnegie Institute of Technology by Esther L. Gatewood.

MAURETANIA HANGS UP ANOTHER RECORD

The Cunard liner Mauretania, holder of the westbound transatlantic speed record, has added new laurels by establishing a new eastbound record, according to cable advices to the Cunard Line.

The ship, which left April 26, arrived at Cherbourg at 3:46 a. m., having made the voyage from New York in 5 days, 8 hours and 56 minutes. This is said to be eight hours faster than any other run ever recorded between these two ports.

The Mauretania's record run from Queenstown to New York was made in 4 days 10 hours and 41 minutes. The record day's run was 676 knots, an average of 28.16 knots per hour. The total average speed for the voyage was 26.06 knots. At that time she was a coal burner and she is now equipped for fuel oil. On her first voyage to this port predictions were made that she would lower her own record, and the belief that she will do so in time is shared by her commander and her officers.

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Abandoned In a Mine

By ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG

In the summer of 1850 three men penetrated that part of Colorado which is now known as Gunnison County. The party consisted of a Cornishman named Hall, an American sailor named Goff, and a Spanish Indian, whose surname of Juarez was corrupted into "Horace" by his companions.

They came from California Gulch and were looking for gold. In those days the presence of silver was not suspected in that part of the "Rockies," and the mines were all "placers." They were all adventurers, and Goff and the Spaniard were, in addition to that, frontier desperadoes of the worst class. They had fallen together haphazard, and started on their venture upon fortune with a few weeks' rations packed on a mule, their tools, arms and the clothes they stood in.

They found eventually a promising spot, and went into camp. It was on the margin of a little stream, where the sand at first showed gold in the washing pans; but, after a time the placer played out, and certain surface croppings prompted them to sink a shaft.

As they went down the ore that they encountered—a sort of rotten quartz—seemed continually on the point of growing richer, but continually failed. So a month's time found them with an unprofitable hole of fifty feet, worn out, discouraged, angry—in brief, ripe for trouble of any kind. Hall had favored going on with the work; the other two were eager to abandon it, and reproached him with the failure. This led to hard words, quarrels, and nights when never a word was spoken at all.

One morning all three went to the shaft, Hall and Horace descending, and Goff remaining above to work the windlass. They ascended and descended by means of a rude rope ladder, as one man's strength did not suffice to draw them up in a bucket. In the course of an hour or two the Spaniard made some excuse to return to the surface, and while he was gone Hall filled the bucket. He gave the signal, and up it went, but when he turned to his pick again he heard a peculiar noise, and looked around to see the rope ladder being withdrawn.

It was then a dozen feet above his head. At that his veins ran ice and his peril flashed before his mind as clear as day.

"Hello, above there," he shouted. "Don't take that ladder away from me."

By that time both ladder and bucket were clear of the shaft, and the flat, sinister face of the American peered over the edge.

"Bawl away, lad!" he called tauntingly. "We'll give you something to bawl about!"

"You ain't going to leave me here, are you?" yelled the miner.

The Spaniard appeared at the verge, with a lump of rock in his hands.

"What for you cry?" he said. "You love the

mine—ver' good—you stay in him; stop now, or I smash you dead."

But the American remonstrated. It was a bit of cruelty more to his fancy to let the fellow starve there; and at last, laughing heartily, they waved him adieu, and went away. Ten minutes later he heard the hoofs patter down the gulch, and he knew he was abandoned.

Hall sat down and tried to think. He knew that rescue by other miners was impossible, for they were the only white men in the district. Discovery by Indians was only a contingency almost equally remote, and such a thing would mean nothing less than the stake.

The sides of the shaft were not timbered, and it was altogether out of the question to attempt to climb them.

He was caught like a trapped rat, and turn the issue however he would it took no other form than death. In a few hours he must begin to suffer from thirst; in a few hours more from hunger; then all the hideous stages of famine and madness. He was buried alive. His hair stood on end at the thought, and spurred by terror, he leaped to his feet and split the air with shrieks and curses.

The hollow shaft echoed them back again until his lungs wore themselves out and he was still. The situation was deadly in its very simplicity, but still he could not make up his mind to die.

Between his paroxysms of horror he gathered his senses and conjured up and dismissed a thousand hopeless plans.

Only one did he attempt to put into execution; that was to cut steps in the shaft sides. He carved a dozen with his pick, but the soft formation crumbled under his toes, and he knew it was vain. Thus the balance of the day passed, and the night.

Morning found him pacing a circle at the bottom of the shaft, his eyes glassy, his breath coming in gasps, and his hand weaving the air in aimless gesticulation. The torments of thirst and hunger, augmented a hundredfold by anticipation, were upon him.

Sometimes he sobbed like a child, sometimes he dropped on his knees and tried to pray, and again he sprang to his feet with a jargon of oaths shook his clenched fist, and called on his murderers to meet him in perdition.

When he looked upward he saw a blue disc of sky, cut in twain by the windlass bar. He stared at this, and as he stared he gave a sudden yell of joy. He seized his pick and scrutinized the handle. It was made of stout, well-seasoned hickory, and very carefully he split off a piece from end to end about the size of his thumb. Then he tapered it gently at the extremities. It was true and elastic, and sprung under his fingers like steel.

This done he snatched off his boots. Thanks to the love of an old mother back in England, he wore long blue stockings, knitted of sound, homely yarn. He loosened a strand with trembling touch, and it unraveled readily.

In a little while it lay in a coil at his feet. Then he stood erect and stripped himself of his flannels, and tore his clothing, piece by piece, to strips. He tried and tested them. It was not long enough.

He split his leather belt in two; he twisted his braces into cord; his coat was lined with a twilled stuff that pulled apart in strands, and gave him twenty feet more. He would have stripped stark naked, but his underclothes were made of goods too flimsy to stand the strain.

At last he judged he had enough, and set about to fashion an arrow from the balance of his pick. He made one heavy at one end, and light in the shaft, and strung the other piece to the bow with braided yarn. He laid the balance of the yarn in a loose circle, tied the end to the arrow, and, with his heart throbbing like mad, made ready.

By this time it was afternoon. At the first attempt the arrow struck the side and clattered back, bringing some loose dirt with it. He re-laid the yarn and tried again.

Up went the arrow and dropped outside. The miner felt the sweat start on his forehead, and very tenderly, lest he should break the string, he drew it in again.

The next time he did not dare look up. Had he done so he would have seen the arrow leap straight and true into the open air, pause for an instant like a bird on the wing, and drop back on the other side of the windlass shaft.

It fell at his feet, and when he saw the cord suspended in the air he burst into wild tears of joy. His hand shook so that he could scarcely attach the rope, but it was made fast at last and went slowly up and back again.

He waited not an instant, but, gathering his strength for a final effort, he seized the rope and started up, hand over hand.

But before he ascended a dozen feet he was seized with a premonition, so potent that he slid back, and, tearing an old letter in two, penciled his name and story on the margin.

"That in case of accident," he muttered, between his teeth.

And well he did so. Had he forgotten it, this story at least would never have been told, for when he was within a fathom of the top—when his haggard eyes had caught the green crests of the pines, and the free air of heaven was in his mouth—the weak rope broke, and he fell headlong into space.

Some wandering miners found his corpse the next year. The American and the Spaniard, Juarez, were never heard of again.

ONE CENT A MONTH

About a year ago a bright looking young man entered our counting-room in response to an advertisement for an assistant shipping-clerk. He told the usual tale of how he desired a position more than wages for the time being, and was willing to accept a nominal salary to start in on. The proprietor was feeling in particularly good humor that afternoon, and said pleasantly:

"Well, sir, what would you consider a nominal salary? What would you be willing to accept in beginning?"

"I want to show you, sir, that I mean business, and I will work for one cent the remainder of this

month, providing you think it would not be too much to double my salary each month thereafter."

"That's a novel proposition, surely," said the proprietor, with a smile. "Do you know what you're talking about, my dear boy?"

"Well, sir, my principal aim is to learn the business," responded the young fellow, "and I would be almost willing to work for nothing, but I'd like to feel and be able to say that I was earning something, you know."

"I'll take you," remarked the proprietor, decisively. "One cent, two cents, four cents, eight cents, sixteen," he enumerated. "You won't get much for a while," he added.

He took him up to the cashier. "This is John Smith," he said. "He will go to work as assistant shipping-clerk to-morrow. His salary will be one cent this month. Double it every month from now on."

"In consideration of my working for this small salary might I ask you to assure me a position for a definite period?" inquired John Smith.

"We don't usually do that," replied the proprietor, "but we can't lose much on you, anyhow, I guess, and you look like an honest fellow. How long do you want employment?"

"Three years, sir, if agreeable to you."

The proprietor agreed, and young Mr. Smith, on pretense of wanting some evidence of the stability of his place, got him to write out and sign a paper that he had been guaranteed a position in the house for three years on the terms stated.

He worked along for six months without drawing a cent. He said he would draw all his earnings at Christmas. The cashier one day thought he'd figure up how much would be coming to the young man. He grew so interested in the project that he kept multiplying for three years. The result almost staggered him. This is the column of figures he took to the proprietor:

First month, .01; second, .02; third, .04; fourth, .08; fifth, .16; sixth, .32; seventh, .64; eighth, \$1.28; ninth, \$2.56; tenth, \$5.12; eleventh, \$10.24; twelfth, \$20.48; thirteenth, \$40.96; fourteenth, \$81.92; fifteenth, \$163.84; sixteenth, \$327.68; seventeenth, \$655.36; eighteenth, \$1,311.72; nineteenth, \$2,623.54; twentieth, \$5,247.08; twenty-first, \$10,494.16; twenty-second, \$20,988.32; twenty-third, \$41,976.64; twenty-fourth, \$82,953.28; twenty-fifth, \$165,906.56; twenty-sixth, \$331,813.12; twenty-seventh, \$663,626.24; twenty-eighth, \$1,327,252.48; twenty-ninth, \$2,654,504.96; thirtieth, \$5,309,009.92; thirty-first, \$10,618,019.84; thirty-second, \$21,236,039.68; thirty-third, \$42,472,078.36; thirty-fourth, \$84,944,156.73; thirty-fifth, \$169,888,313.44; thirty-sixth, \$339,776,626.88; total salary for three years, \$5,322,554,233.67.

The proprietor nearly fainted when he understood how, even if he were twice as rich as Vanderbilt, he would be ruined in paying John Smith's salary. He concluded to discharge the modest young man at once. Smith had figured up how much would be due him and reneged on the proprietor of his written agreement. Rather than take chances in the courts and let everybody know how he had been duped, he paid Smith \$5,000 and bade him good-by.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

NEW YORK, JUNE 9, 1922

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

COLD AIR FROM HER WELL

A woman at Newark, N. J., has a dry artesian well which always emits a stream of cold dry air. This she has had piped through her house, where it is used for drying clothes, and in place of ice, and for keeping the house cool in summer.

SEA HORSE DISAPPEARING

The sea horse (hippocampus) is becoming scarcer in the North Atlantic, and the Scientific American suggests that this is due to the large quantities of heavy oils used as fuel by ocean-going vessels. This oil kills the tiny crustaceans which are the sole food of the little sea horse.

FIND MASTODON TUSKS

"Was Pratt County, Kan., at one time the grazing ground for mastodons?"

Such is the question the citizens of the county are asking themselves. A fragment of a tusk ten inches in diameter was found a few days ago while digging a ditch, and Prof. Rufus Gray of the Pratt High School believes it is from a giant mastodon, a skeleton of which was found thirty years ago in the same neighborhood.

The ribs of this skeleton were eleven feet across, indicating a height of twenty-five feet or more. This skeleton, according to old time citizens, was found in nearly the same spot as the tusk was found.

OWNS MOST VALUABLE PECAN TREE

What is said to be the most valuable pecan tree in the United States is situated near Concrete, Tex. It is owned by A. B. Roth, a farmer, who was offered and refused \$1,000 for the tree as it stands. From the nuts of this tree Roth is planting a 100-acre pecan tree orchard. The trees are being planted in squares sixty feet apart. The nuts of the remarkable tree are large and of the soft shell variety. They are in such demand for planting purposes that they sell readily for 50 cents a pound.

When the little pecan trees are two years old

they will be budded with buds from the parent tree, which will assure their bearing true to the original stock.

Roth, from a few trees on his place, sold over \$2,000 worth of trees last year. As there will be 1,600 trees on the 100 acres, and buds from only the best tree will be used, it should produce a fortune in ten years, according to pecan growing authorities.

Because of the deep rooting system of the pecan, the general farm work will not be interfered with and the trees will not interrupt the growing of crops on the land, cultivation of which will force growth upon the trees, it is explained.

LAUGHS

Mrs. A.—What did your husband say when he saw the bill for your new gown? Mrs. B.—I didn't hear. I started to play on the piano.

Friend—Does the new landlady at your boarding house appear to be getting a living out of it? Boarder—Yes, she is, but we are not.

He—They tell me Jones is Cornish by birth—She—How strange that it should run in the family! I thought they were always caused by tight shoes.

"Hubby," said Mrs. Begg, "I want a new ring." "All right, my dear," acquiesced her lord and master. "I'll have the electrician put in a new door-bell to-morrow."

Sonny—Aw, pop, I don't want to study arithmetic. Pop—What! a son of mine grow up and not be able to figure up baseball scores and batting averages? Never!

"Well, dear, I guess the honeymoon is over." "Why do you say that?" pouted the bride. "I've been taking stock and find I'm down to two dollars and sixty-five cents."

"Since you have decided not to marry me, please give me my presents back." "Well, of all the nerve! You're the first man I've ever been engaged to that showed such a mean spirit."

"Won't you take this seat?" said the gentleman in the car, rising and lifting his hat. "No, thank you," said the girl with skates over her arm. "I've just been roller-skating and I'm tired of sitting down."

First Newsboy—A guy handed me a half dollar for a paper dis morning. I went out to de depot to get de change, an' when I came back he was gone. Second Newsboy—How long was you gone for de change? First Newsboy—'Bout two hours.

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

FROM ALL POINTS

SKELETON OF BARBARIAN TIMES FOUND IN GENEVA

While digging a trench in his vineyard, at Chancy (near Geneva), a peasant found a human skull and bones placed in a sort of crypt.

These remains date apparently from the time of the great Barbarian invasions; they were lying on a sheet of limestone as is found in Burgundian and Alemannic tombs.

Another interesting discovery has been made in the town of Geneva on a spot where old houses are being pulled down. The workmen have brought to light many rows of well preserved oak statues 9 feet high. They mark the place where the shore of the lake stood at the time of the Romans. It is not yet known whether they formed part of the Gallo-Roman port of Geneva or supported lake dwellings. They are at a distance of 450 yards from the present shore of the lake.

KILLED CHICKS IN EGGS

Joseph Diefenbach, a veteran musician and an amateur poultry raiser, will have to decide whether to discontinue raising poultry or give up playing his bass viol at home. He has discovered the two will not harmonize in the home.

His wife objected to his playing the bass viol in the living room owing to the constant vibration, and he arranged a place in the basement where he could practise. He also had four settings of eggs, fifty-two in all, about ready to hatch in the basement.

Diefenbach became worried when the eggs failed to hatch and investigation disclosed a dead chick in each egg. He was unable to determine the cause and consulted an expert. He was informed that the vibration from the bass viol playing had killed the chicks.

CUELESS BILLIARD EXPERT

There have been all sorts of freaks in the athletic world, including the handless billiard wonder, the armless harness horse racing driver, the one-armed golfer and the three-fingered baseball pitcher, but it remains for Sam Weinfeld, young Hungarian, to come to bat as the cueless billiard expert.

Weinfeld, who is just twenty-one years old, has been doing this trick for years; in fact, since the age of six. He makes the most difficult shots with his fingers—shots that the world's wizards of the cue, Willie Hoppe, Jake Schaefer, Caesar Conti and others find trouble executing with their sticks.

Weinfeld's skill seems uncanny. He gives the cue ball a peculiar twist, much after the fashion of the small boy shooting marbles, and claims he can close his eyes and locate the ball. He also says he is able to make forty points at straight rail while his opponent is making five at three-cushion.

The young wizard recently arrived from abroad, having given special exhibitions in the billiard halls of European capitals.

HATED THE WHITES

Peter Waiska, eighty-seven years old, the last of the Waiskas, proudest branch of the long line of Chippewa Indian chiefs, is dead.

The aged Indian carried with him to his grave the strain of pride and all his hatred of the "whites," which for years made the Waiska Indians the outstanding braves of the many tribes inhabiting the Great Lakes section. He died of exposure to the cold, an element which for years he scoffed at.

The Waiskas inhabited the region now known as the Bay Hills and the Waiska River and Bay district in Chippewa County, Mich., when the first white missionaries and settlers pushed their way into the wilderness. The tribe, with its centuries old pride, looked with disfavor on the white man, who came and cleared their lands and then broke them with a plough.

Peter Waiska until the last maintained the same feeling of hatred that befitted the final survivor of his race. His friends say that he grew more and more melancholy year by year as he watched the forest disappear and the white men's modern inventions take their place.

KEPT COFFIN UNDER HER BED FOR 25 YEARS

The coffin that Mrs. Eliza Bass kept under her bed for 25 years has at last been put to use. The old woman has died at the age of ninety-four and they have buried her, as she commanded, in the rude box that kept her close and constant company for so long.

Its proximity soothed her and made her slumbers more satisfactory. She always declared, moreover, it kept her lonely little house on the edge of the village as safe from chicken thieves and other marauders as if she had a pack of fierce bull dogs to protect her.

The negro population of Lumberton, N. C., and the surrounding country had a deadly fear of the old woman's house. They would go hundreds of yards out of their way to keep from passing near it.

Back in 1898 Mrs. Bass became ill and Arren Ivey, an old carpenter, was brought into the room and instructed as to how the coffin should be made. In a few days a nice box made of heart pine and varnished black was brought into the room and, at the old woman's request, placed under her bed. Immediately she grew better. This happened several times in subsequent years.

"Why do you get well every time when they bring the coffin out from under the bed?" she was once asked.

"Well, I'll tell you," she said. "I hate coffins as much as anybody. So when I see it, it makes me hate to die so bad that I just naturally gets well."

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Mystery Magazine."

GOOD READING

CRACK-PROOF GLASS GLOBES FOR GAS

A series of opal globes, designed for use with the incandescent gaslight, recently placed on the market in England, will survive the most severe conditions of heat without cracking, says the Scientific American. Every housewife who has had trouble with the usual glass globe knows how expensive and dangerous the ordinary form is, with its short life and frequent crackings.

The new material changes all this. There is absolutely no chance of its cracking through overheating, even if a mantle breaks and the flame impinges direct on the globe or shade. For it is vitreous silica, silica fused in the intense heat of the electric arc (at a temperature of over 400 degrees F.) and allowed to cool into the many beautiful and artistic forms in which it is available.

The great characteristic of this fused silica is that its coefficient of expansion is practically nil. From this cause arises its immunity from damage by sharp changes of heat. We have seen a piece of this material dipped into water, placed wet in a Bunsen gas flame and heated to bright redness, and then suddenly thrown into cold water. No apparent change took place, and this drastic treatment may be repeated indefinitely without the "vitreasil" (as it is called) losing its beautiful glaze or its characteristic semi-transparency. This latter property, which bestows upon light transmitted through it a delightful soft effect, is due to the presence of innumerable minute air bubbles throughout the whole body of the material.

PROTECTING THE FUR SEAL

The Pacific fur seal herd is on the move. The annual migration to the northward has begun, and the vanguard will shortly appear off the coast of Washington and British Columbia, leading the way to the summer rendezvous on the Pribiloff Islands in the middle of Bering Sea. All winter long the seals have been scattered through the South Pacific, but as spring approaches the mating instinct turns their heads to the North and they converge toward the California coast and then follow their time-worn groove along the Western coast of the United States, British Columbia and Alaska, the milestones of their route being the deep sea fishing banks where succulent salmon, halibut and other fish keep them sleek and fat.

Few, if any, other animals are so carefully pampered and nursed by Uncle Sam, and except for such fostering the fur seal probably now would be an extinct animal. With the exception of a small colony that summers on the Commander Islands, off the coast of Kamchatka, Siberia, the herd which propagates on the Pribiloffs is the only fur seal herd known to be in existence.

When Alaska was purchased from Russia the seals on the Pribiloff Islands numbered, accord-

ing to various official estimates, from 2,000,000 to 5,000,000 animals, but due to ruthless operations by sealers of many nations, the herds were decimated annually. The United States Government, year after year, endeavored to negotiate treaties for the protection of the seals. In 1891 a measure of success was obtained in a treaty with Great Britain which practically eliminated Canadian sealers.

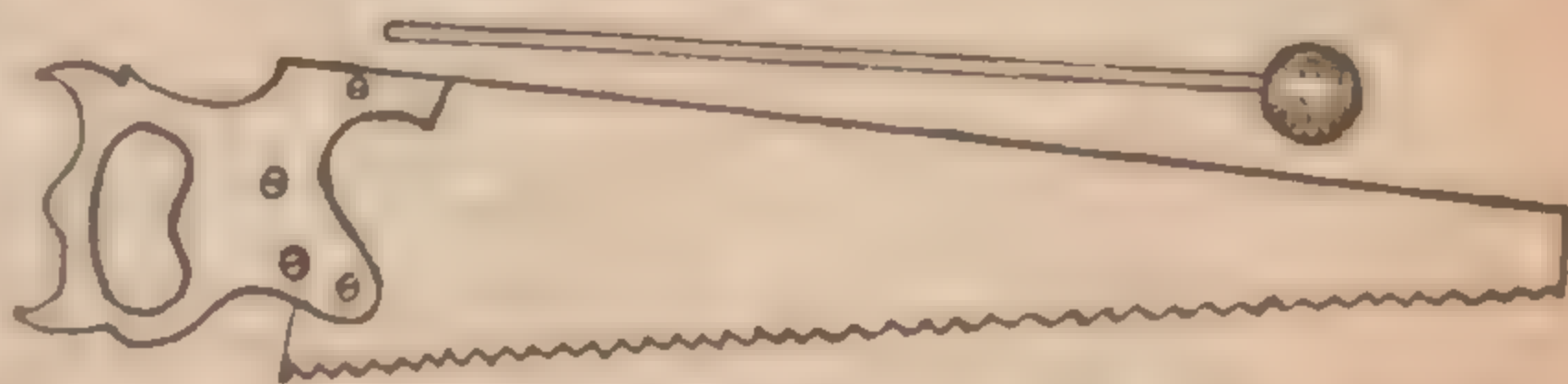
The massacre of the herds continued, however. Numerous schooners, flying the Japanese flag annually reaped a rich harvest, and the Japanese government steadfastly refused to interfere with the enterprise. Finally, in 1911, when the herds by unrestrained pelagic sealing had been reduced to approximately 250,000 animals, the efforts of the United States were rewarded and a treaty among four nations—Russia, Great Britain, Japan and the United States—was negotiated to continue in force for 15 years.

This agreement prohibited any of the nationals of the signatory powers from taking seals at any time anywhere, with the provision, however, that agents of the United States might take a few thousand skins each year from bachelor males summering on the Pribiloffs. This does not interfere with the propagation of the herds. By the terms of the treaty the United States not only amply rewarded the nations for any loss sustained by their nationals, but agreed to give annually 15 per cent. of the proceeds of the skins taken from the few animals killed.

During the months of April, May and June this year, the cutter Snohomish will guard the herd along the route between the Columbia River and the Alaskan boundary, and the cutter Unalga from the latter point to the entrance to Bering Sea. After the middle of June, the herd, with the exception of a few stragglers, will have passed into Bering Sea and three other coast guard vessels will maintain a rigid guard there.

Musical Handsaw

Greatest Novelty of the Age



If you can carry a tune in your head, you can learn to play this instrument, and secure a job on the stage at a good salary. No musical education necessary. Struck with a specially made mallet the perfectly tempered saw produces loud, clear, rich tones like a violin. The same effect may be had by using a violin bow on the edge. Any tune can be played by the wonderful vibrations of the saw. It requires two weeks' practice to make you an expert. When not playing you can work with the saw. It is a useful tool as well as a fine instrument.

Price of Saw, Mallet and Instructions... \$5

HARRY E. WOLFF, 166 W. 23d St., New York

GOLDFISH IN SUBWAY

Nobody would ever expect to find goldfish in the subway, but they are there. If sceptics doubt this take a trip over to the Atlantic avenue station of the Interborough and see. Moreover, it is doubtful whether the thousands of passengers who pass that point daily are aware of the aquarium that stands near the window of the signal station at the north end of the station platform.

The Long Island commuter had passed it many times before he noticed it. One morning he caught a glimpse of it as the train speeded by. The following day he determined to investigate.

The aquarium is about two feet long and eighteen inches high. One of the men employed in the signal station who is a lover of outdoors placed it there and tends it.

"It is a rather odd place to keep an aquarium, isn't it?" he remarked. "Well, I like flowers, but I can't grow them here under the street. So I tried an experiment with goldfish and they are thriving in their subterranean atmosphere. Down here in the darkness, away from the sunshine, these fish help me to pass the hours away. They aren't any trouble and they give me pleasure."

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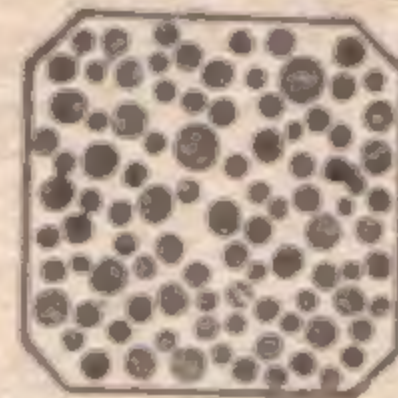
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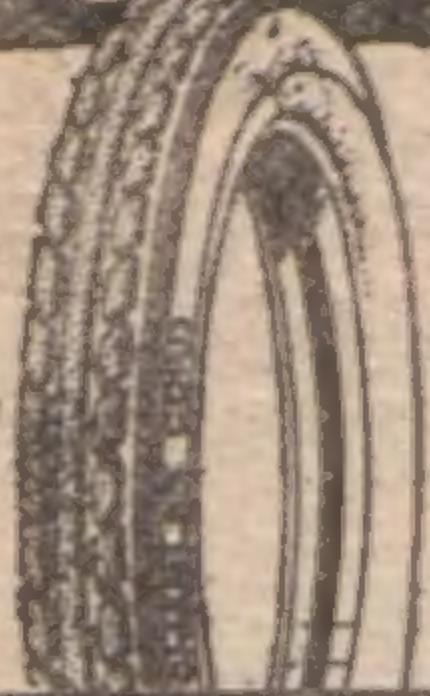
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CHARLES TIRE CORP. Dept. 746 2824 Wabash Avenue, Chicago

New Hair Growth After BALDNESS

On legal affidavit, John Hart Brittain, business man, certified to this: "My head at the top and back was absolutely bald. The scalp was shiny. An expert said that he thought the hair roots were extinct, and there was no hope of my ever having a new hair growth.

"Yet now, at an age over 66, I have a luxuriant growth of soft, strong, lustrous hair! No trace of baldness. The pictures shown here are from my photographs." Mr. Brittain certified further:

INDIAN'S SECRET OF HAIR GROWTH

"At a time when I had become discouraged at trying various hair lotions, tonics, specialists' treatments, etc., I came across, in my travels, a Cherokee Indian 'medicine man' who had an elixir that he asseverated would grow my hair. Although I had but little faith, I gave it a trial. To my amazement a light fuzz soon appeared. It developed, day by day, into a healthy growth, and ere long my hair was as prolific as in my youthful days.

That I was astonished and happy is expressing my state of mind mildly. Obviously, the hair roots had not been dead, but were dormant in the scalp, awaiting the fertilizing potency of the mysterious pomade. I negotiated for and came into possession of the principle for preparing this mysterious elixir, now called Kotalko, and later had the recipe put into practical form by a chemist.

That my own hair growth was permanent has been amply proved."



Photo when bald.



After hair growth

How YOU May Grow YOUR Hair

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"In continuing the Treasury savings movement after the close of the recent war it was the object of the Treasury Department that the economic habits developed in America during the war might be made permanent and that the saving and safe investment of money might become a universal practice. Let me assure you that any effort on the part of the banking institutions to improve the financial condition of the people through the saving of money has the hearty indorsement of the Treasury Department."

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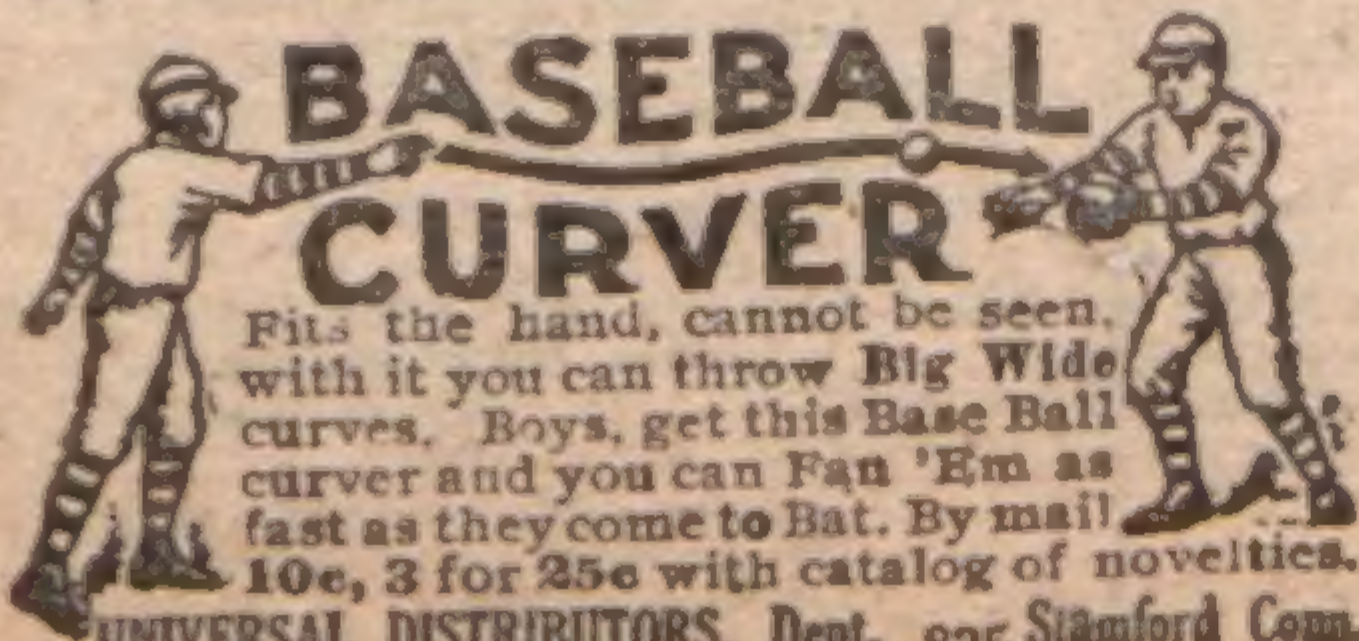
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